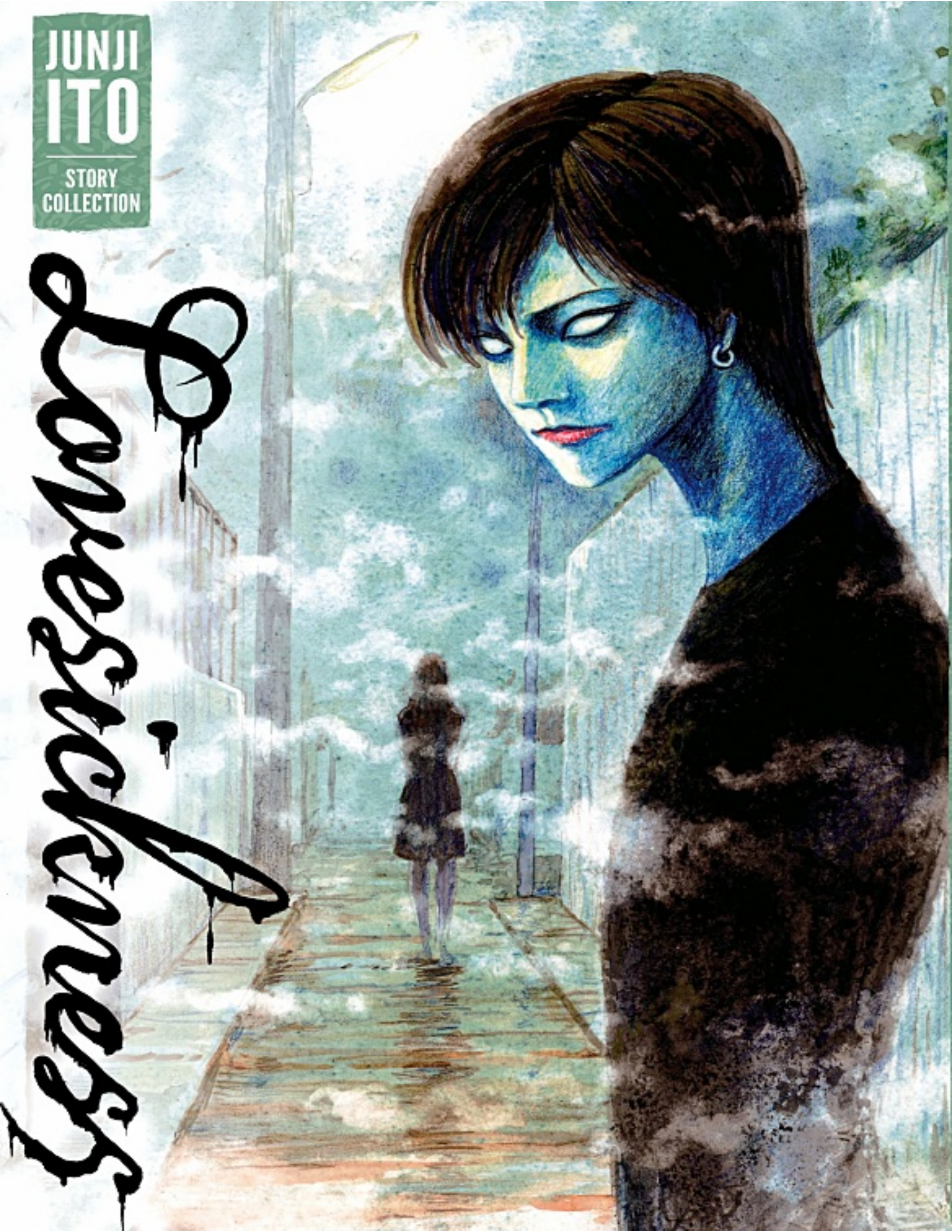
JUNJI ITO

STORY COLLECTION

Lovesick Ones



JUNJI ITO

STORY COLLECTION

Obsessions

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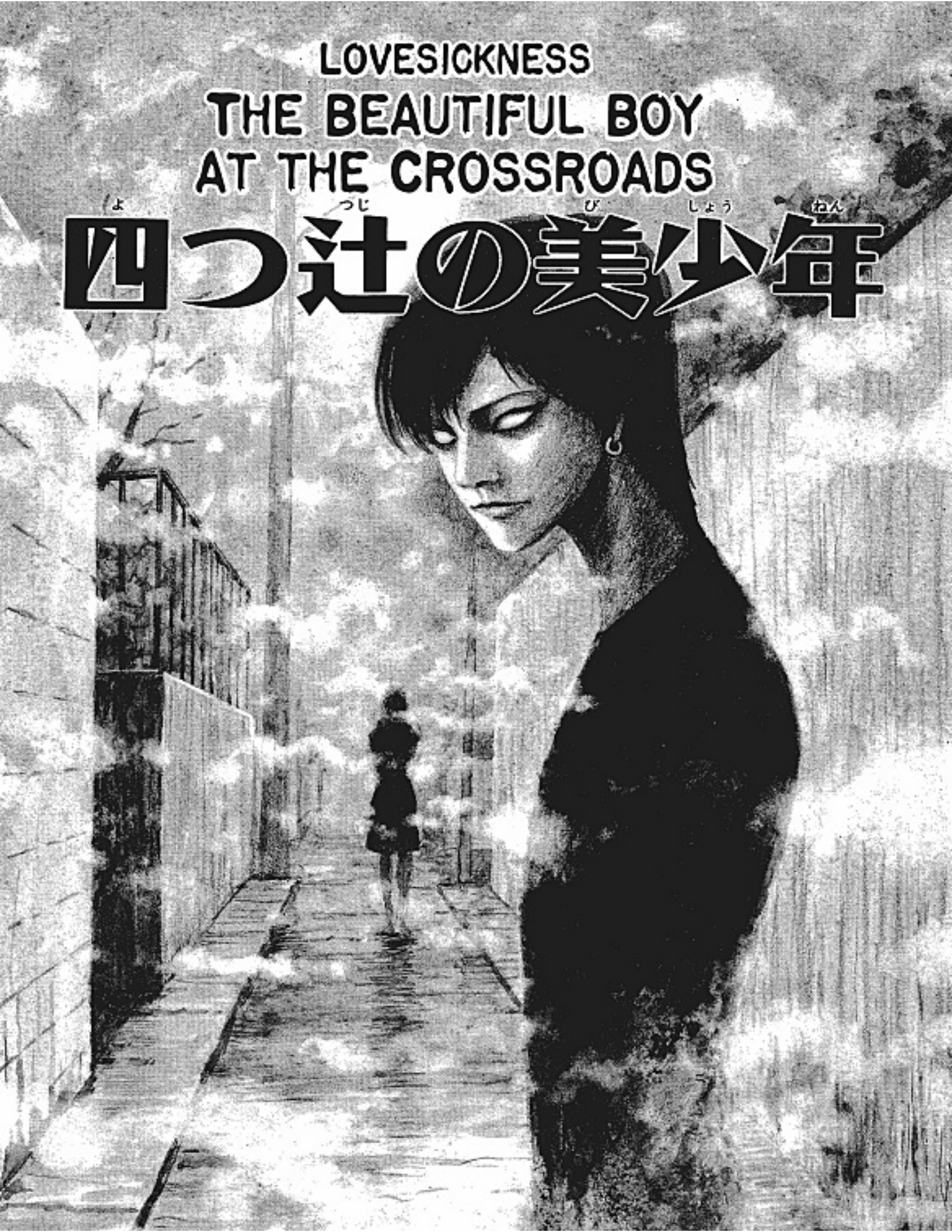
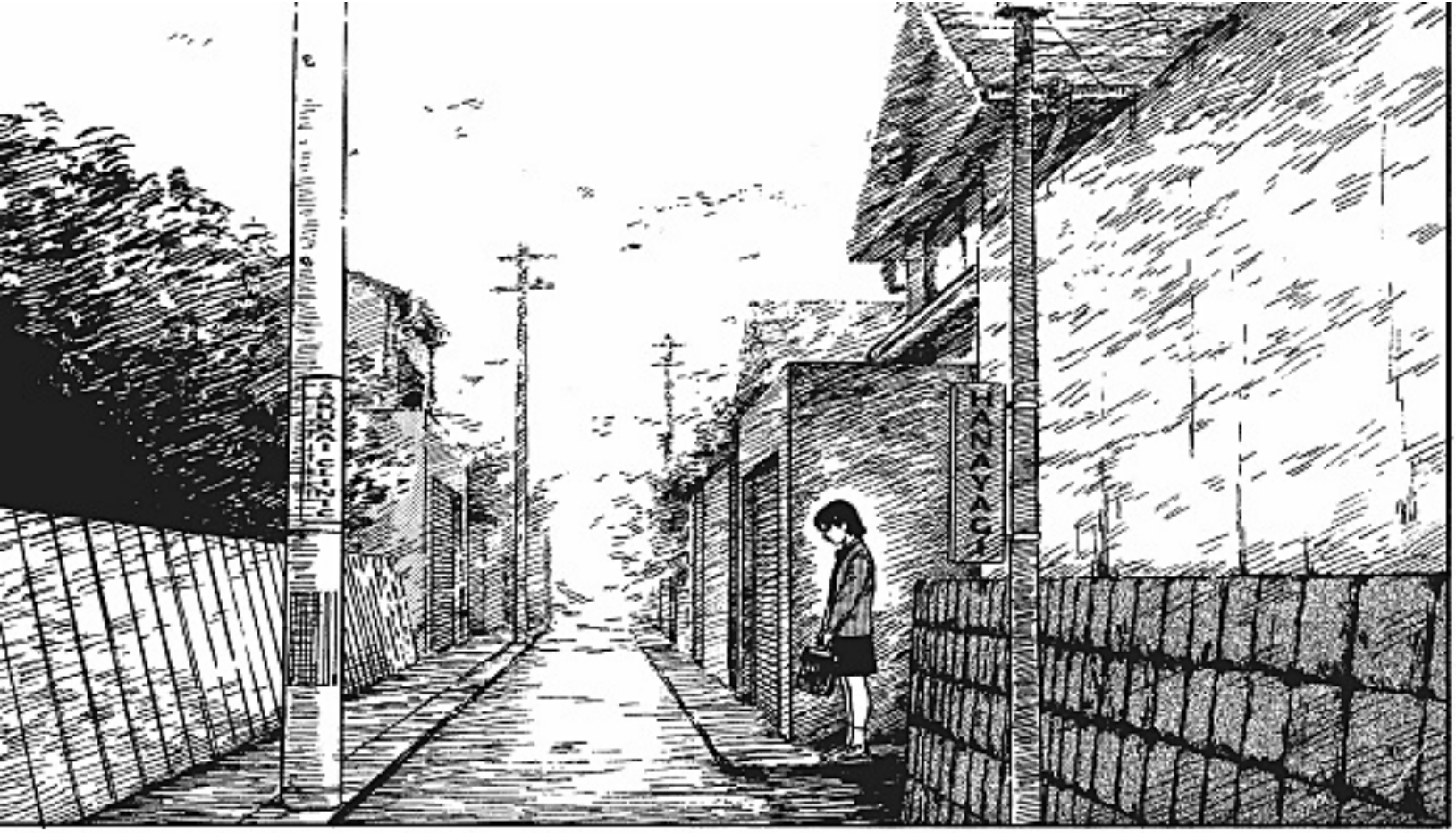
LOVESICKNESS

THE BEAUTIFUL BOY AT THE CROSSROADS

四つ辻の美少年



SAKURAI CLINIC


HANAYAGI

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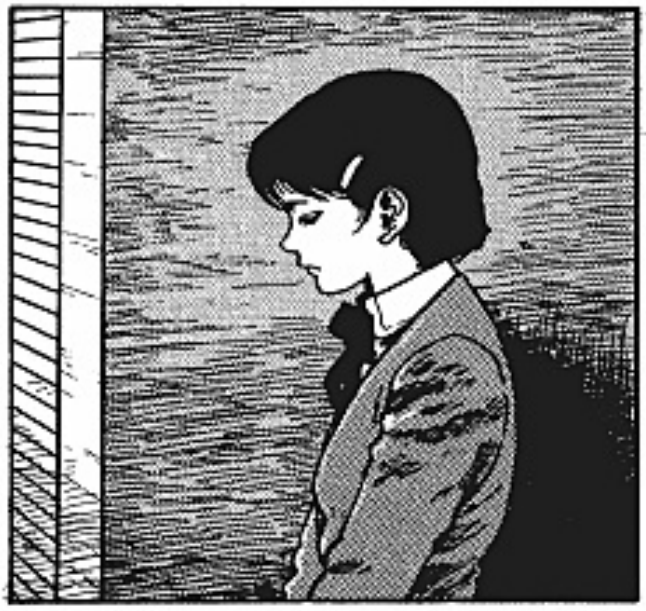

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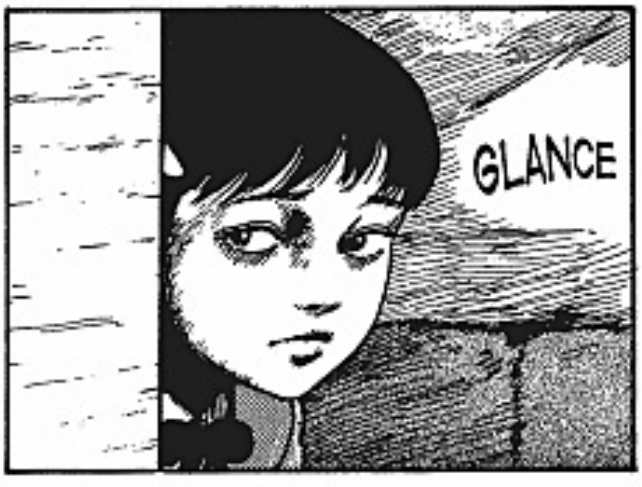

GLANCE

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
ESH
NOTE BOOK
HM?
EXCUSE ME.
UM, UH.
...ARE YOU HIDING YOUR FACE WITH A NOTE-BOOK?
WHY, YOUNG LADY...
WELL... UM...
BOOK
BUT COULD YOU TELL ME MY FORTUNE ?
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.

I'VE BEEN HEARING A LOT OF STUDENTS AROUND HERE HAVE BEEN INTO THAT LATELY.
BUT I'M NOT SURE IF I'M THE RIGHT PERSON TO TELL YOUR FORTUNE.
SO THIS IS THAT CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE, IS IT?
HA HA.
WHAT? YOUR FORTUNE?
YES... I KNOW IT'S RUDE COMING FROM A STRANGER, BUT...
SO THEN... WHAT DID YOU WANT TO ASK ABOUT?
YES... UM. MY LOVE LIFE...
AND EVERYONE SAYS THE FORTUNES ARE BETTER WHEN THE FOG'S THICK.
IS THAT SO?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT HAS TO BE THE FIRST PERSON WHO COMES BY.
HMM... FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, ROMANCE WILL BLOOM FOR YOU! TRY TAKING THE LEAD.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL GIVE IT A GO.
I SEE. YOUR LOVE LIFE, IS IT?
OKAY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

KATUNK
KATANK
KATUNK
KATUNK

I HOPE THE MOVERS DON'T GET INTO AN ACCIDENT.
LOOKS LIKE THE FOGGY WEATHER IN THIS TOWN HASN'T CHANGED IN THE EIGHT YEARS WE'VE BEEN GONE.
ALMOST AT NAZUMI STATION. YOUR FATHER SHOULD BE THERE TO PICK US UP.
THE FOG'S GETTING THICKER.
WE USED TO LIVE HERE WHEN YOU WERE SMALL, YOU KNOW. YOU MIGHT END UP RUNNING INTO YOUR FRIENDS FROM KINDERGARTEN.
WHAT'S WRONG, RYUSUKE? YOU SEEM A LITTLE DOWN. DO YOU MISS OUR OLD HOME?
THIS FOGGY TOWN...
I ENDED UP IN THIS TOWN AGAIN BECAUSE OF DAD'S WORK.
YOU'RE RIGHT, MOM. AND I DON'T REALLY MISS THE OLD PLACE.

THEY JUST FINISHED BRINGING EVERYTHING IN.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE MOVERS?
NO, I JUST GOT HERE.
MAKE THE TOWN CLEAN
WERE YOU WAITING LONG, HONEY?
NAZUMI STATION
HEY! OVER HERE!
IT'S A STRANGE, ANCIENT JAPANESE FOLKWAY. YOU DON'T SEE IT IN OTHER PLACES ANYMORE.
YOU KNOW, THAT FORTUNE-TELLING THING THEY'VE BEEN DOING AROUND HERE FOR AGES. YOU STAND AT AN INTERSECTION AND GET A GOOD OR BAD FORTUNE FROM THE FIRST PERSON WHO COMES ALONG.
BUT IT'S BEEN REALLY POPULAR HERE LATELY WITH THE KIDS.
CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE?
ON MY WAY HERE, I GOT ASKED TO DO A CROSSROADS FORTUNE.
...
C'MON, HURRY UP.
RYUSUKE? WHAT'S WRONG?

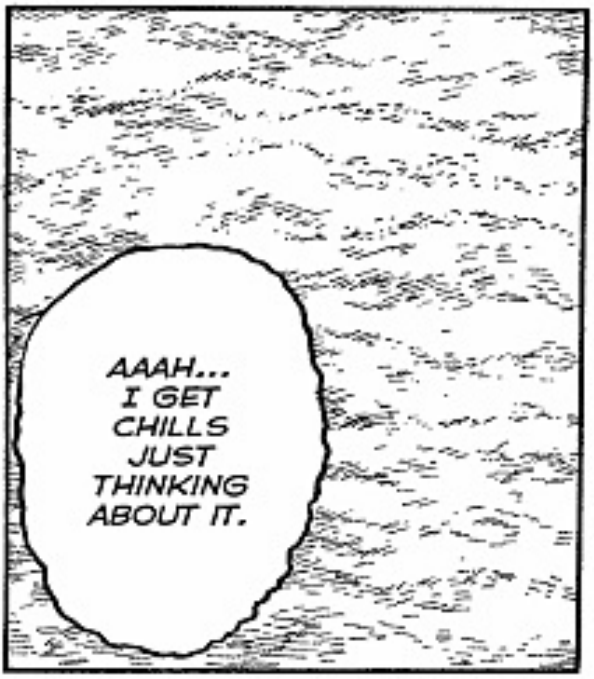
I WANT TO INTRODUCE A NEW CLASS-MATE.
THIS IS RYUSUKE FUKADA.
HE ACTUALLY USED TO LIVE IN NAZUMI YEARS AGO, SO SOME OF YOU MIGHT ALREADY KNOW HIM.
HEY? HE'S PRETTY COOL, HUH?
CHATTER CHATTER
YEAH. LUCKY WE GOT HIM IN OUR CLASS.
BING BONG
BING BONG
WE WENT TO THE SAME KINDERGARTEN.
I TOTALLY REMEM-BER YOU, RYU-SUKE.
REMEMBER ME? WE USED TO PLAY SWORDS ALL THE TIME IN KINDERGARTEN.
NOT REALLY... SORRY...
HEY! REMEMBER ME?

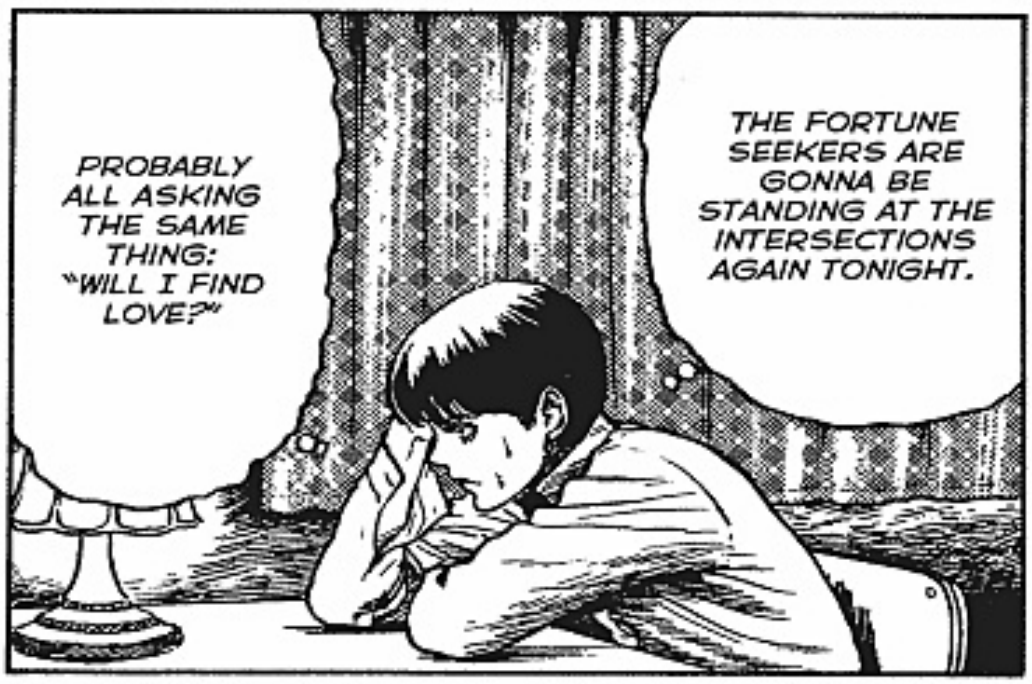
MY REUNION WITH MIDORI SHIBAYAMA IN PARTICULAR MADE MIDDLE SCHOOL MUCH MORE FUN. SHE HAD BEEN MY SECRET FIRST LOVE.
I RAN INTO OLD FRIENDS JUST LIKE MY MOTHER SAID, AND THE FOG OVER MY HEART SEEMED TO CLEAR BIT BY BIT.
NAZUMI MIDDLE
OH! MIDORI, IS THAT YOU?
YUP! SO YOU DO REMEMBER ME!
SAME HERE.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
RYUSUKE, THIS IS MY BEST FRIEND, SUZUE TANAKA. SHE'S IN CLASS B.
SHE WENT TO A DIFFERENT KINDERGARTEN, SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MET HER THEN.
YOU'RE ALL THE GIRLS IN MY CLASS CAN TALK ABOUT, RYUSUKE.
THEY'RE ALL, "THIS HOT GUY TRANSFERRED TO OUR SCHOOL." BUT THEY'VE GIVEN UP ON WINNING YOU OVER SINCE YOU HAVE MIDORI.

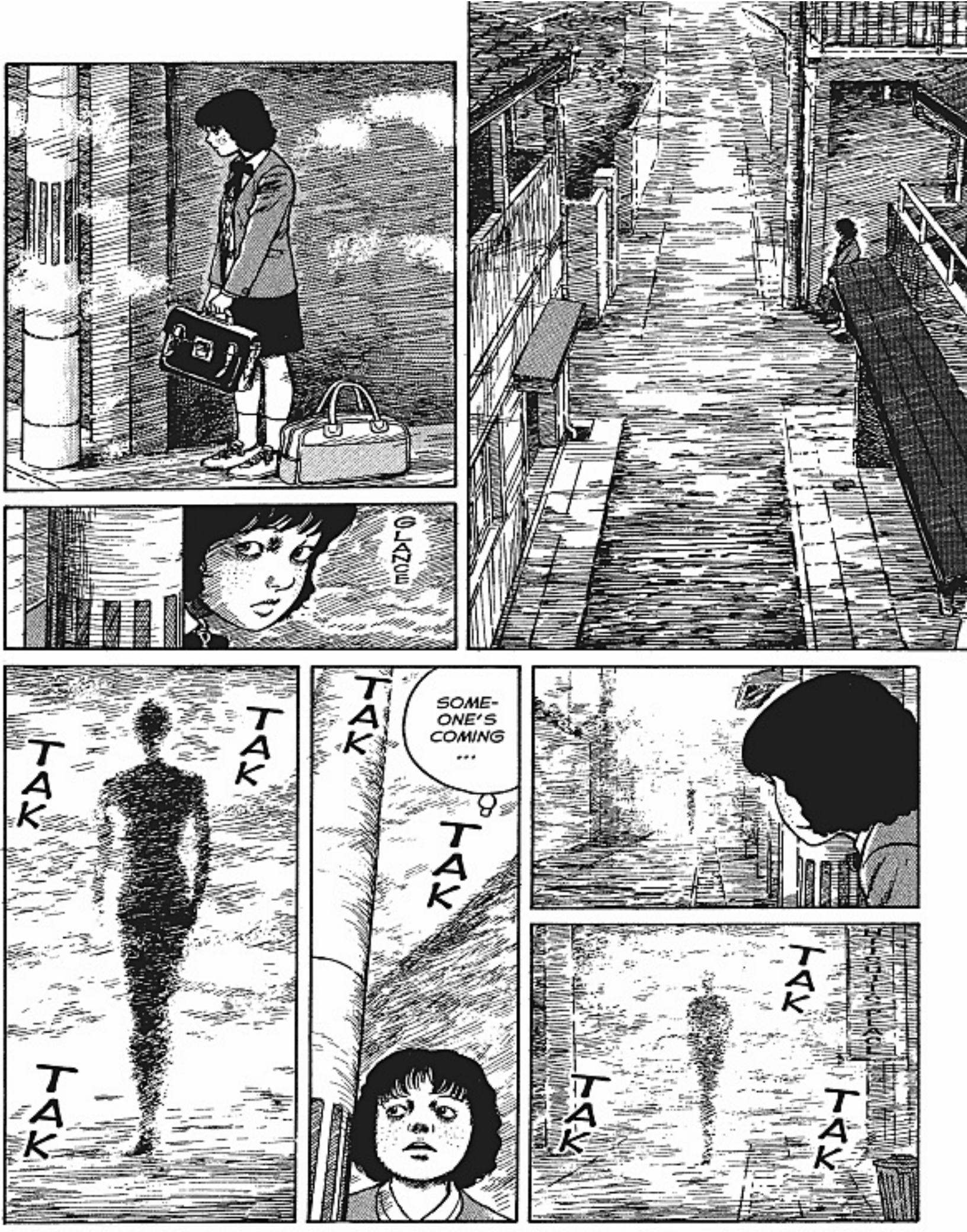
INSPIRING LOVE IN ALL THE BOYS.
MIDORI'S REALLY POPULAR, YOU KNOW, RYUSUKE.
WHOA! SUZUE! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WE'RE NOT...
STOP IT. RYUSUKE'S GOING TO BELIEVE YOU! AFTER ALL, *YOU'RE* THE ONE THEY'RE ASKING ABOUT, SUZUE.
AND INSPIRING THEM TO DO CROSSROADS FORTUNES, HM? WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OF THEM ARE STANDING AT INTERSECTIONS, ASKING ABOUT THEIR FUTURE WITH MIDORI. RIGHT, MIDORI?
SO SHE WENT FOR THE FORTUNE-TELLING AND GOT TOLD TO TAKE THE LEAD. SO SHE DID, AND NOW SHE AND THE GUY ARE HEAD OVER HEELS FOR EACH OTHER.
OH MY... THAT'S NOT TRUE! HAYAKAWA FROM CLASS A WAS IN LOVE WITH AN EIGHTH GRADER.
IT'S A WASTE OF TIME.
AND ANYWAY, IT'S NOT LIKE THOSE FORTUNES ARE EVER RIGHT.
SO STUPID.

THERE'S ALWAYS A RISK WITH FORTUNE-TELLING.
AND THE PERSONALITY OF THAT FIRST PERSON TO COME ALONG... THAT'S ALSO PART OF YOUR FORTUNE.
BUT... HOW MUCH POWER IS THERE REALLY IN THE WORDS OF SOMEONE WHO HAPPENS TO PASS BY?
AND WHAT IF THE PERSON IS MEAN AND GIVES YOU THE WORST FORTUNE?
RYU-SUKE?
I GUESS SO.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, RYUSUKE? YOU KNOW ABOUT CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE—
YOU SHOULDN'T DO THAT CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE THING...
...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?

CHK
FOGGY AGAIN TODAY.


AAAH... I GET CHILLS JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.


PROBABLY ALL ASKING THE SAME THING: "WILL I FIND LOVE?"
THE FORTUNE SEEKERS ARE GONNA BE STANDING AT THE INTERSECTIONS AGAIN TONIGHT.


GLANCE
TAK
TAK
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SOME-
ONE'S
COMING
...
TAK
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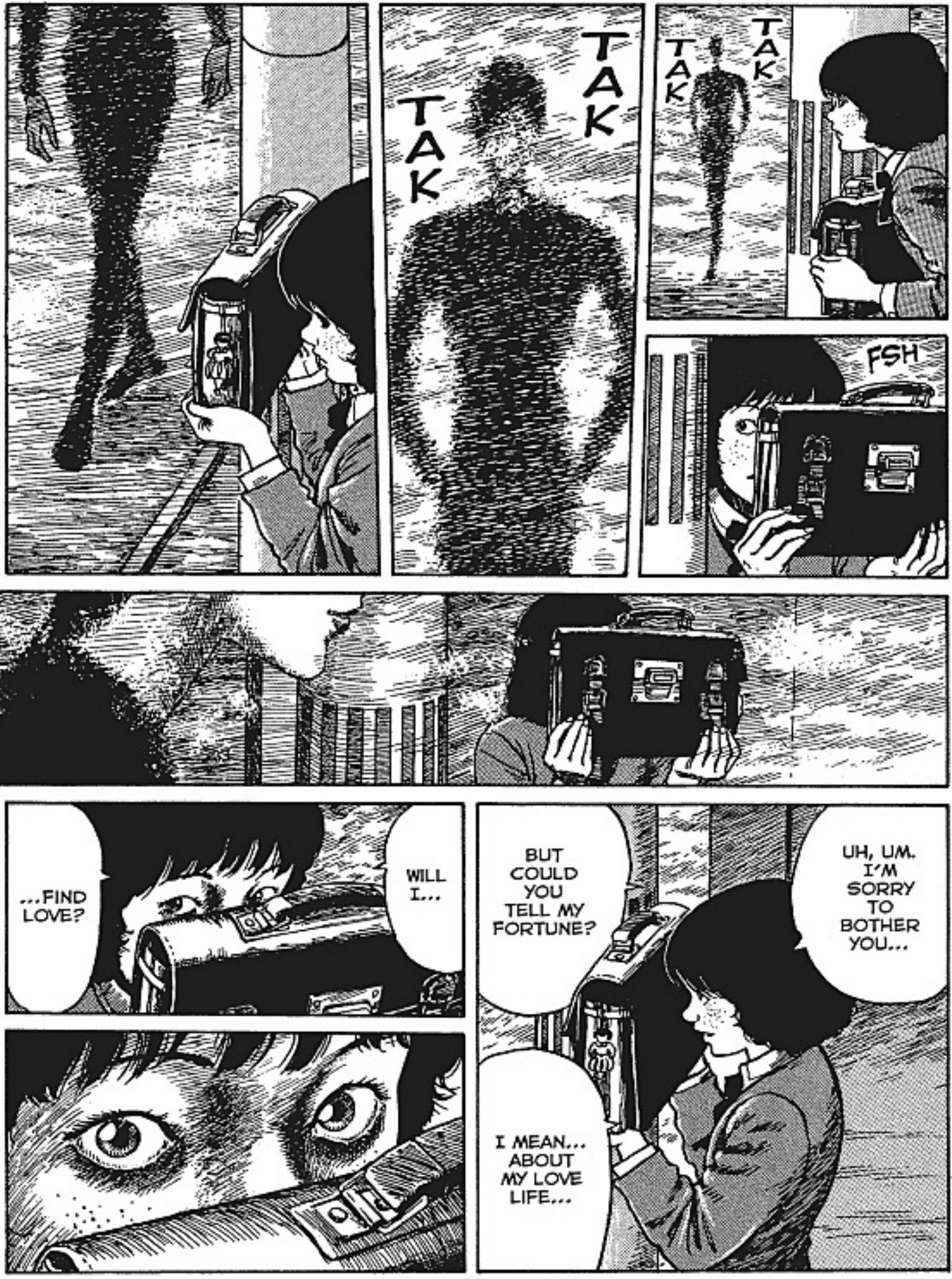
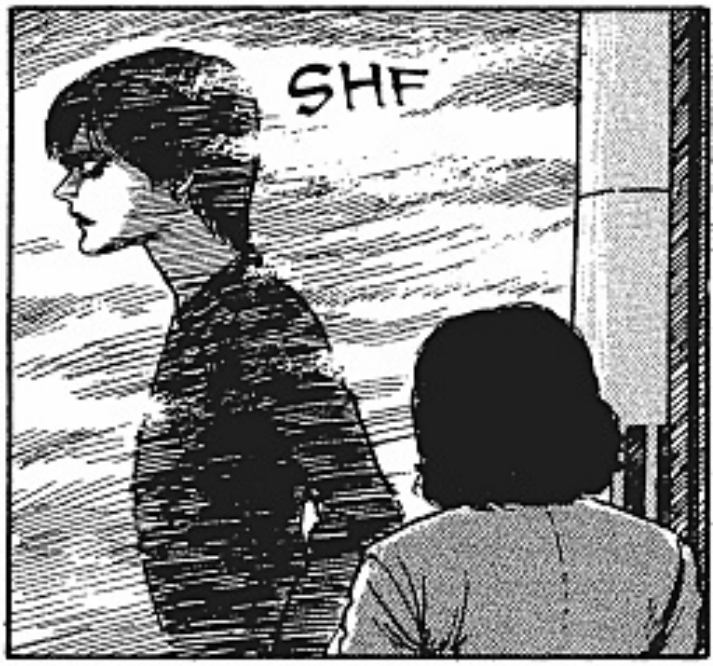
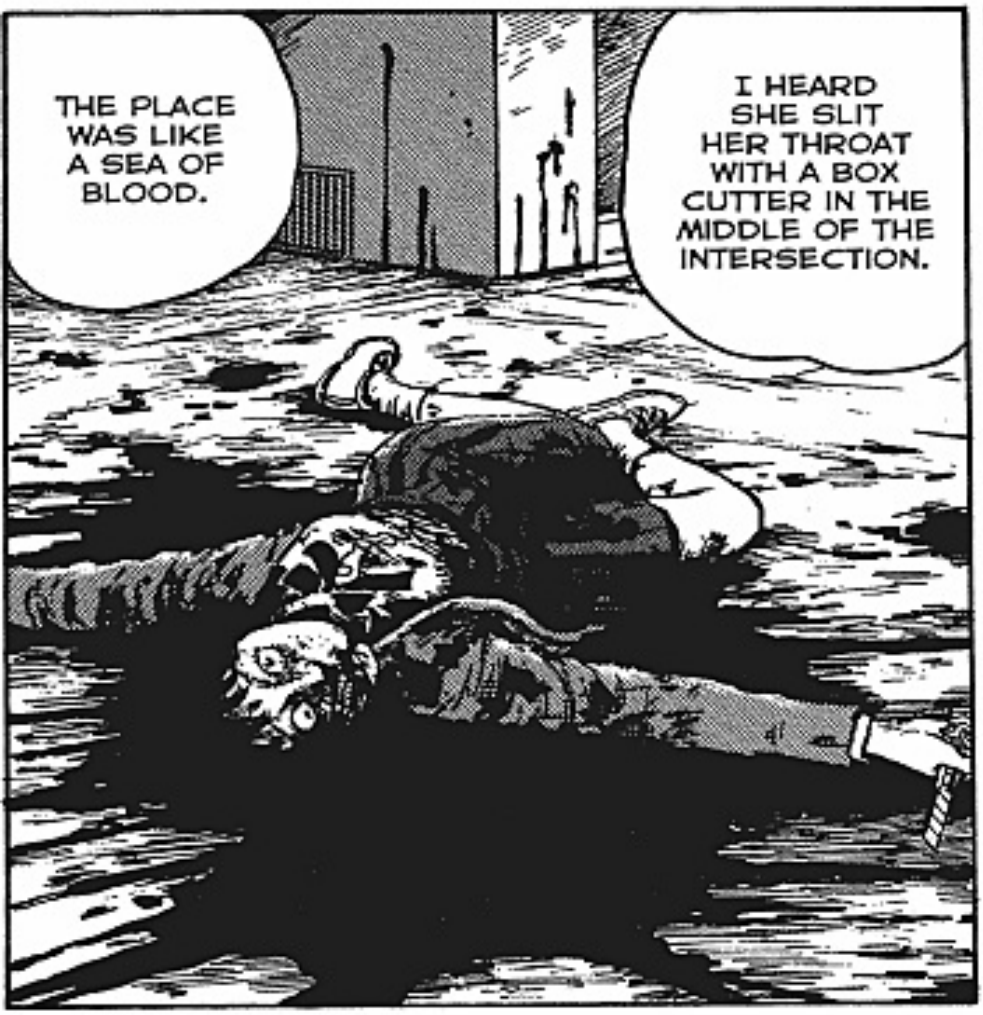

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
FSH
UH, UM. I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
BUT COULD YOU TELL MY FORTUNE?
I MEAN... ABOUT MY LOVE LIFE...
WILL I...
...FIND LOVE?

YOU WILL...

...

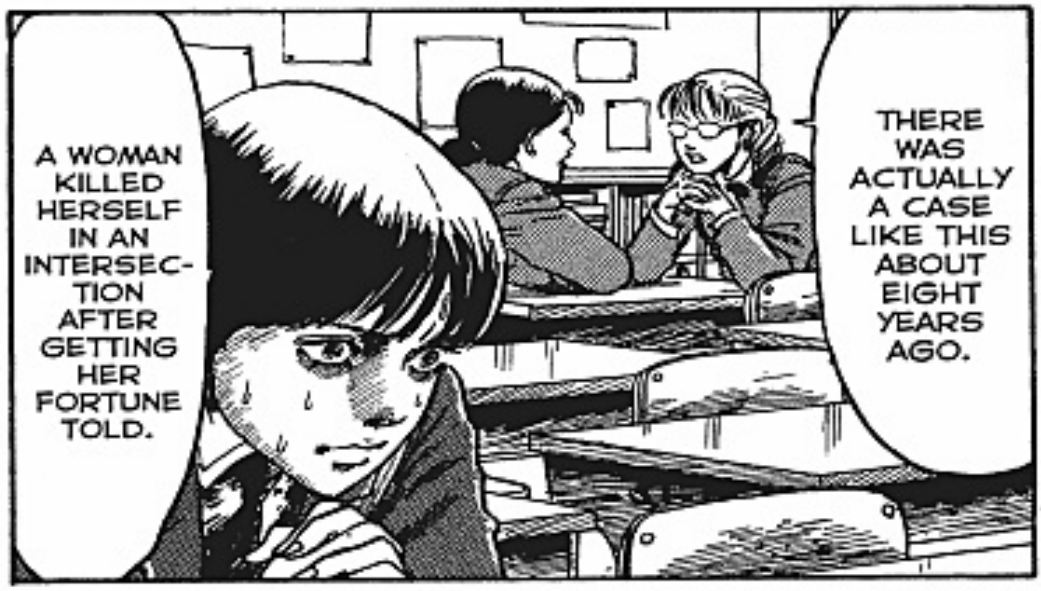
...NEVER FIND LOVE.


SHF


THE PLACE WAS LIKE A SEA OF BLOOD.
I HEARD SHE SLIT HER THROAT WITH A BOX CUTTER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE INTERSECTION.

I HEARD IT TOO!
I HEARD A SEVENTH-GRADE GIRL DIED AT THE CROSSROADS BEHIND THE COMMUNITY CENTER YESTERDAY!
I GUESS IT WAS SUICIDE...

WHAT? HOW DO YOU FIGURE?
BUT, LIKE, I HEARD SHE WAS MAYBE ASKING FOR A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE.


A WOMAN KILLED HERSELF IN AN INTERSEC-TION AFTER GETTING HER FORTUNE TOLD.
THERE WAS ACTUALLY A CASE LIKE THIS ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO.

DUNNO. THERE WAS NO NOTE. AND THE FOG WAS SO THICK NO ONE SAW ANYTHING.
I WONDER WHY SHE KILLED HERSELF, THOUGH.

...
KLATER
A WOMAN KILLED HERSELF IN AN INTERSECTION AFTER GETTING HER FORTUNE TOLD.
THERE WAS ACTUALLY A CASE LIKE THIS ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO.
I'M BEING PUNISHED. I JUST KNOW I'M BEING PUNISHED ...
AAAH... WHY DID WE HAVE TO MOVE BACK HERE?
THE PLACE WAS LIKE A SEA OF BLOOD.
HAAH
SHE SLIT HER THROAT WITH A BOX CUTTER...
HAAH

I HAD A HUGE FIGHT WITH MY MOM AND RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE ON A FOGGY EVENING.
I THREW A TANTRUM WHEN I HEARD WE WERE MOVING. I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE MY FRIENDS.
MY CRIME WAS JUST SO TERRIBLE...
IT WAS... I WAS JUST SIX AT THE TIME...
IT WAS THEN THAT SHE CALLED OUT TO ME.
ARGH!
I WANDERED AROUND IN THE WORST MOOD.
AND THEN TELL ME MY FORTUNE...
STOP AND LISTEN TO MY PROBLEM.
LITTLE BOY... LITTLE BOY... STOP A SECOND...

YOU KNOW?
BUT... BUT HIS BABY'S INSIDE MY TUMMY...
BUT... HE HAS A WIFE. AND KIDS.
I REALLY LIKE THIS GUY... I LIKE HIM A LOT.
OKAY?
YES, I LOVE HIM SO MUCH... SO MUCH THAT I COULD DIE.
BUT I LIKE HIM...
I LOVE HIM... I ADORE HIM...
HE TOLD ME TO GET RID OF IT... AWFUL, RIGHT?
AND I WANT THE BABY... BUT WHEN MY BOYFRIEND FOUND OUT, HE TURNED MEAN.
BUT THE FIRST PERSON TO SHOW WAS A LITTLE KID.
IF SHE WAITED AT THE INTERSECTION, THE FIRST PERSON TO COME ALONG WOULD SAVE HER... THAT'S WHAT SHE WAS THINKING AS SHE STOOD THERE.
SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, SO SHE PUT ALL HER HOPES ON A FORTUNE. SHE GAMBLED THAT THE CROSSROADS FORTUNE WOULD SAVE HER.
LOOKING BACK ON IT NOW, I THINK SHE HAD LOST HER MIND.

HMPH. WHAT ARE YOU EVEN TALKING ABOUT?
...
SO? WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHOULD I STAY WITH HIM?
AND THAT KID WAS IN A VERY BAD MOOD.
DUMMY!
NOT A CHANCE!
...WILL MY BOYFRIEND AND I LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER OR NOT?
LISTEN ... OKAY, LISTEN. BASI-CALLY...
A FIERCE REGRET CAME OVER MY CHILD'S HEART.
THAT NIGHT, I STARTED TO WORRY ABOUT HER, OF COURSE.
I LOOKED BACK FOR A SECOND AND THE IMAGE OF HER THERE IS STILL BURNED INTO MY EYES.
WHAT IF SHE...
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER...?

HOLDING A BOX CUTTER IN HER HAND... THE AREA WAS A SEA OF BLOOD.
SHE WAS LYING THERE, IN THE SAME CLOTHES AS THE DAY BEFORE.
SO THE NEXT DAY, I WENT BACK.
BECAUSE OF ME, THAT WOMAN AND THE BABY INSIDE HER...
I KILLED HER...

MIDORI ...
YOU'VE BEEN WEIRD LATELY. IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
YOU CAN TALK TO ME. IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO...
AH!
RYUSUKE, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK UPSET.
NO... IT'S NOTHING.
BUT THANKS FOR WORRYING ABOUT ME.
IT'S JUST... I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU HAD SOME BAD MEMORIES OF CROSSROADS FORTUNES.
YOU GOT ALL GLOOMY THE OTHER DAY WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT IT.
BUT MAYBE I'M OVERTHINKING IT.
NO PROBLEMS HERE...
YOU SURE? I GUESS THAT'S FINE THEN. BUT YOU CAN TALK TO ME ANYTIME IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM.

THE GIRLS IN CLASS WERE TALKING ABOUT THE WOMAN WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE EIGHT YEARS AGO, RIGHT?
IT'S JUST, CROSS-ROADS FORTUNES ARE PRETTY PAINFUL FOR ME, ACTUALLY.
YOU'RE A WEIRD GIRL.
YOUR IMAGINA-TION'S OUT OF CONTROL.
SHE HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO DO, SO SHE TRIED A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE.
BUT SHE WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR AND GOT PREGNANT.
I REALLY LOVED HER.
THAT WAS ACTUALLY MY AUNT. SHE LIVED WITH US. SHE ALWAYS USED TO SPOIL ME.
THAT'S... IT CAN'T BE...
THAT'S WHY I—
WHIRL
AH! RYUSUKE!

MIDORI!
...
YOU'RE WALKING HOME ALONE AGAIN TODAY. WHAT HAPPENED TO RYUSUKE?
SUZUE...
YEAH?
HUH?
HE'S AROUND.

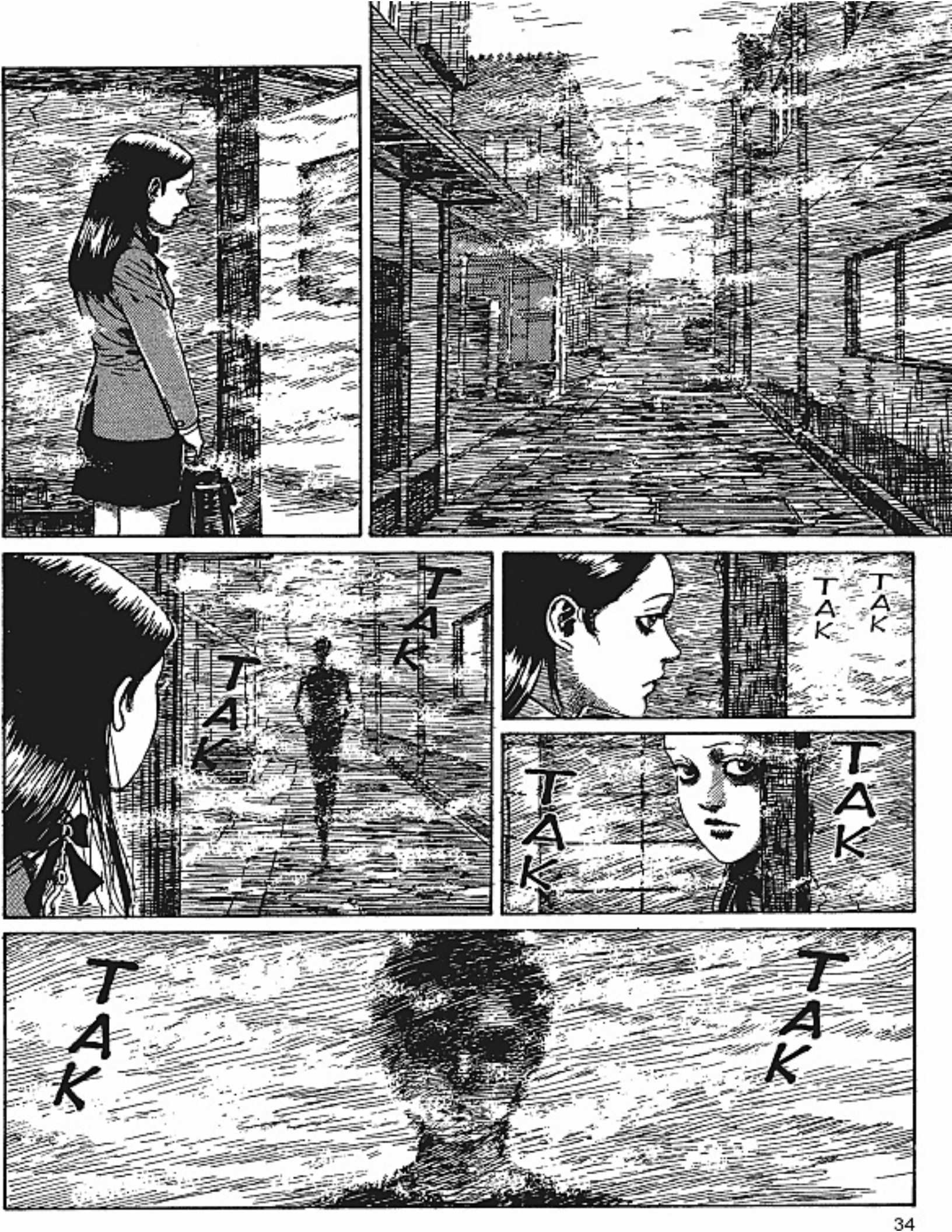
NEW DEETS. RIGHT BEFORE, SHE CALLED A FRIEND.
SO, LIKE, THAT SEVENTH GRADER KILLED HERSELF AT AN INTERSECTION, RIGHT?
HUH? WHO'S THAT?
ANYWAY, SO... HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE BEAUTIFUL BOY AT THE CROSSROADS?
SHE SAID SHE WAS WAITING FOR A FORTUNE WHEN THIS GUY CAME ALONG, AND HE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL IT WAS LIKE HE WAS FROM ANOTHER PLANET. AND HE TOLD HER THAT SHE'D NEVER FIND LOVE.
SHE SAID HE WAS ALL IN BLACK, REALLY TALL, SUPER HANDSOME.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. I GUESS THE CALL WAS KIND OF WEIRD... SO, OKAY...
YEAH... IT IS...
FUKUYO STORE
BUT IT'S A WEIRD STORY.
MAYBE SHE WAS ALREADY STRANGE, EVEN BEFORE THE SUICIDE.
SHE WENT ON AND ON LIKE SHE WAS POSSESSED AND THEN HUNG UP.

...
ARE THINGS MAYBE NOT GOING WELL WITH RYUSUKE?
YOU SEEM DOWN, MIDORI. DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
IT'S LIKE HE'S BEEN AVOIDING ME LATELY.
ACTU-ALLY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
THAT'S... THERE'S NO WAY HE HATES YOU.
I HAVE ZERO IDEA WHY, THOUGH... IT MUST BE BECAUSE HE HATES ME.
NO PROBLEM! LEAVE IT TO ME!
THANKS, SUZUE. THAT'S REALLY NICE OF YOU. BUT...
I'M SURE HE HAS SOME KIND OF REASON.
DO YOU WANT ME TO ASK HIM?

THAT'S HOW MUCH SHE LIKES YOU—SO WHY ARE YOU AVOIDING HER?
SHE EVEN CRIED.
...SO MIDORI'S JUST WORRIED.
THAT'S WHAT SHE THINKS. THAT YOU HATE HER, RYUSUKE... IF THAT'S TRUE, WHAT EXACTLY DON'T YOU LIKE ABOUT HER?
Staff Only
DO YOU HATE HER NOW?
AS IF I COULD HATE HER.
...

...I CAN'T CHANGE THAT.
IT'S ALL MY FAULT...
I DON'T DESERVE TO BE WITH HER.
I DON'T EVEN DESERVE TO TALK TO HER!
...
...RYU-SUKE.
COME ON. WHAT HAPPENED? RYUSUKE... RYUSUKE!
WHAT'S WRONG? THIS IS TOTALLY NOT NORMAL. PLEASE TALK TO ME! I'M SURE I CAN HELP!
I FEEL LIKE THIS WAY, MIDORI WON'T HAVE TO SUFFER.
...
STOP BUGGING ME ABOUT THIS!
JUST QUIT IT!

I'M SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU. GOODBYE.
...BUT... WELL, FINE...
SHE'S SUFFERING RIGHT NOW.
YOU KNOW...
I KNOW ...
...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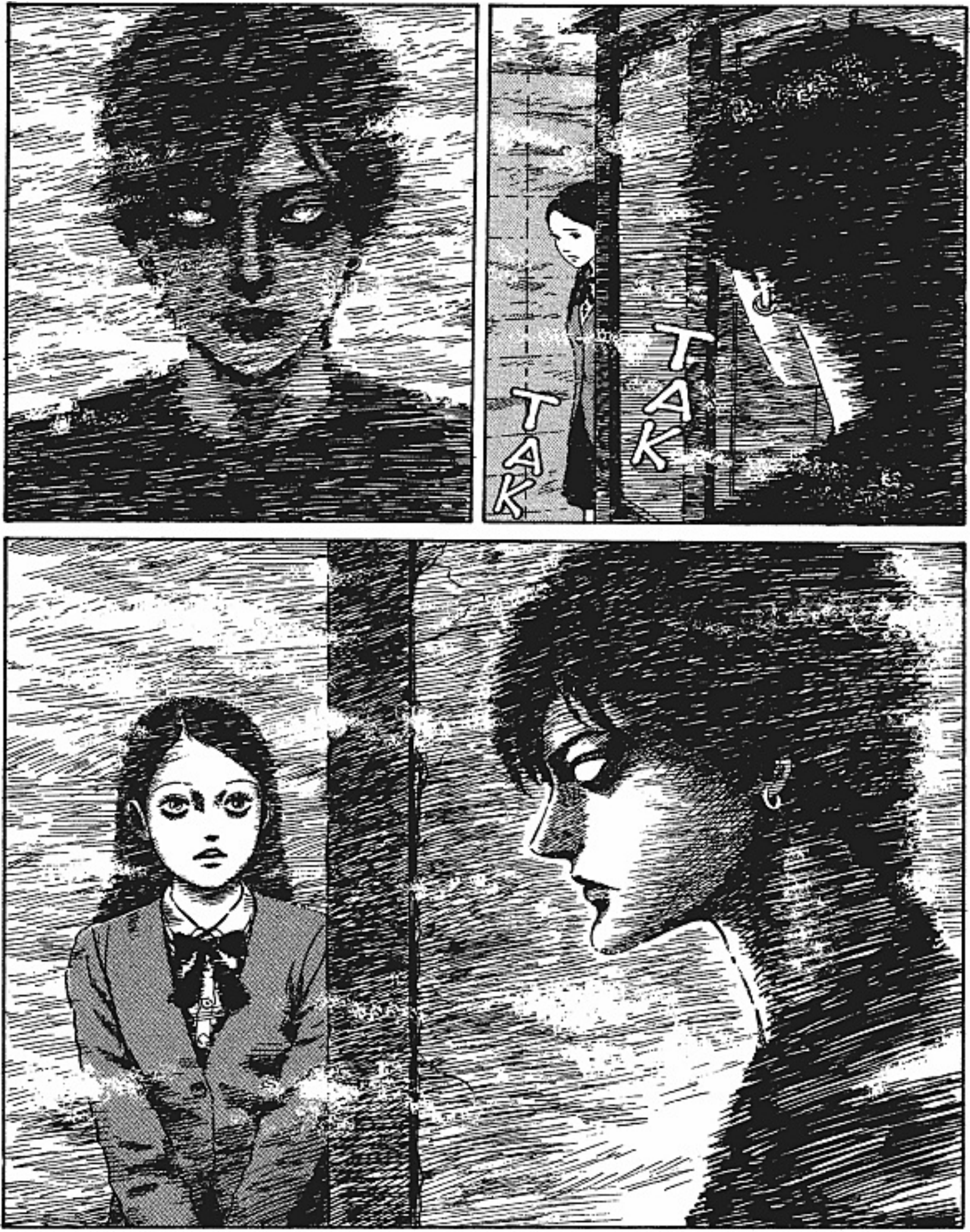
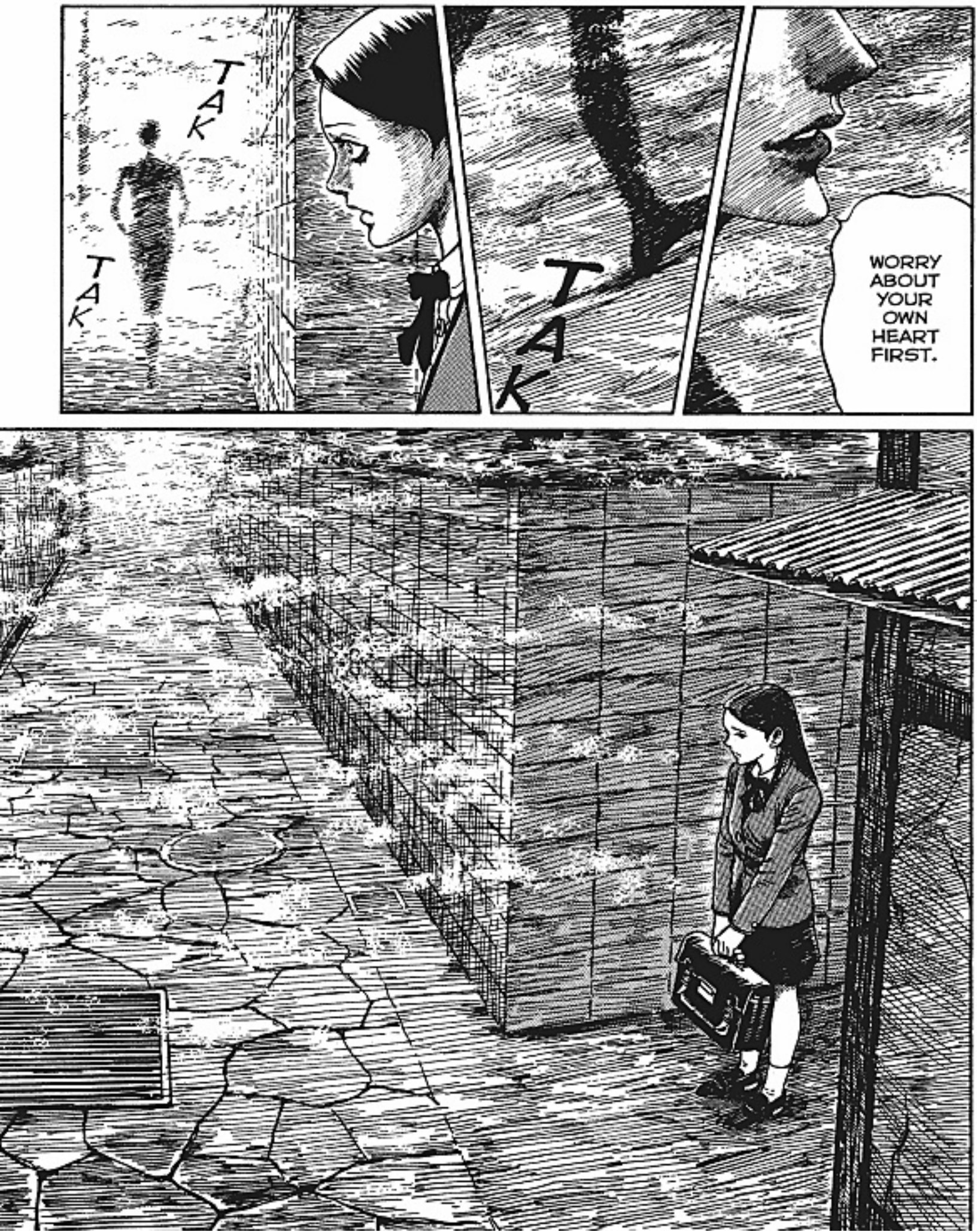

TAK
TAK

WILL YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION?
I... WANT TO KNOW MY FORTUNE.
UH, EXCUSE ME...?
SHE'S UPSET BECAUSE HER BOYFRIEND'S BEEN STANDOFFISH LATELY.
AND HE SEEMS TO BE STRUGGLING WITH SOMETHING, TOO.
IT'S ABOUT MY FRIEND.
WHAT CAN I DO SO THEY CAN BE HAPPY LIKE THEY USED TO BE?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THINK TOO HARD ABOUT IT. PLEASE JUST TELL ME WHATEVER COMES TO MIND.


TAK
TAK
TAK
WORRY ABOUT YOUR OWN HEART FIRST.

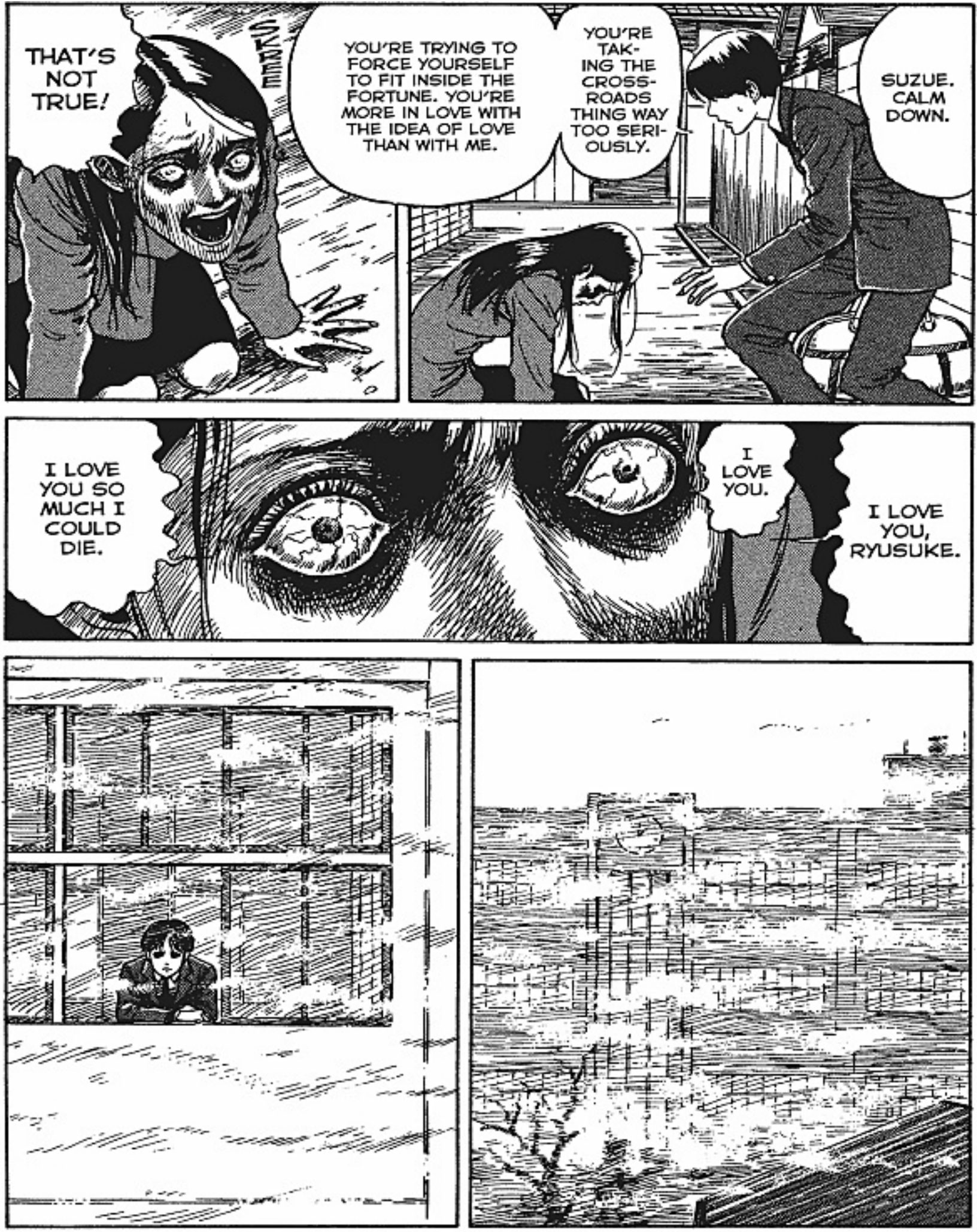
...
HE DID...
UNFORTU-NATELY, HE SAID HE WANTS TO END THINGS WITH YOU.
I DID ASK HIM. BUT...
SO, SUZUE... WHAT DID RYUSUKE SAY?
YOU DID ALL THAT FOR ME, SUZUE?
...IF YOU COULD BE CLOSE LIKE YOU USED TO BE.
I ASKED FOR A CROSSROADS FORTUNE. ABOUT HOW YOU TWO COULD BE HAPPY...
A CHILL RAN UP MY SPINE, HE WAS SO HANDSOME.
HE WAS TALL... DRESSED ALL IN BLACK, A SHARP LOOK ON HIS FACE.
HE CAME. HE WAS... THE FIRST PERSON.
I DID. AND I'M SURE IT WAS THAT BEAUTIFUL BOY OF THE CROSSROADS EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT.

I REALIZED I'VE BEEN LYING MYSELF TO THE POINT THAT I'VE FOOLED MYSELF. I'VE BEEN DOING THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF WHAT I WANT.
BUT... WHAT MADE ME SHIVER THE MOST WAS WHAT HE SAID TO ME.
I LIKE RYUSUKE! AND I HAVE EVER SINCE HE TRANSFERRED HERE.
SO I'LL TELL YOU FLAT-OUT, MIDORI.
BUT I'M GOING TO LIVE TRUE TO MYSELF FROM NOW ON!
CLANG CLANG CLANG
GOODBYE! I'M GOING TO GO TELL RYUSUKE!
SO THE TRUTH IS, I FEEL LUCKY THAT IT'S OVER BETWEEN YOU.
I LIKE HIM SO MUCH I COULD DIE!
I'M SORRY, MIDORI. I REALLY LIKE HIM!

IN FACT, SHE JUST GOT MORE AND MORE INTENSE.
BUT SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO MY REFUSALS.
NATU-RALLY, I WASN'T INTER-ESTED IN DATING ANYONE.
FROM THAT DAY ON, SUZUE TANAKA CHASED ME NON-STOP.
AND IN THE MORNING, SHE'D BE WAITING AT THE FRONT DOOR.
SHE CALLED ME ALL THE TIME, EVEN LATE AT NIGHT.
RRRR-RRRR-RRRR
WHERE HAD THAT WELL-MANNERED SUZUE GONE?
SHE WAS HAUNTED BY LOVE-SICKNESS.
YES... SICK. IT WAS LIKE SHE WAS SICK...
I LOVE YOU... HERE... A BENTO...
IT MIGHT HAVE JUST BEEN IN MY HEAD... BUT HER EYES WERE SUNKEN, HER CHEEKS HOLLOW. SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS SICK.
AND IT SEEMED LIKE SHE EVEN LOOKED DIFFERENT EVERY DAY.
MORNING, RYUSUKE ...

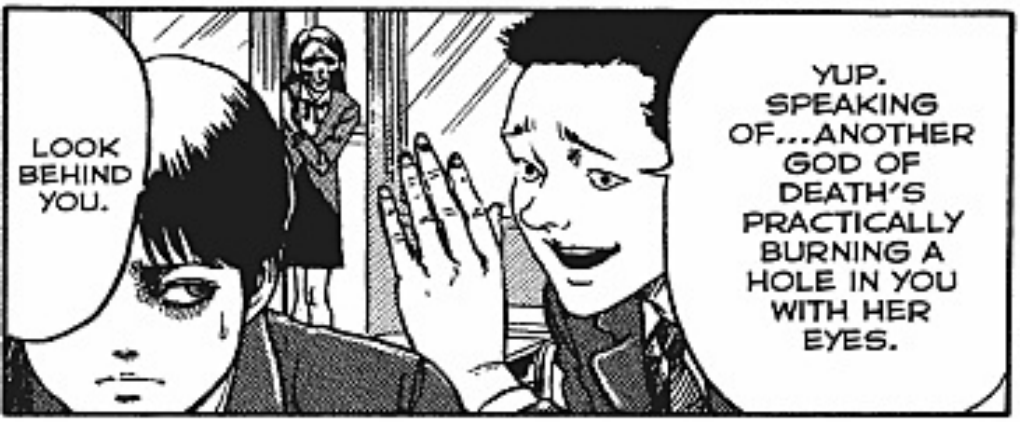
I HAVE ONE!
BUT YOU NEED A LUNCH TODAY, RIGHT?
IF YOU KEEP HANGING AROUND ME, I'LL CALL THE COPS.
SUZUE... YOU'VE GOT TO STOP ALREADY.
WHAP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! STOP IT!
AH!
THEN EAT MINE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE LUNCH IN YOUR BAG!
THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOU IN MY LIFE! GET OUT OF MY FACE!
I LIKE MIDORI!
I'VE HAD IT! HOW ARE YOU NOT GETTING THIS?! I'LL SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU! I DON'T LIKE YOU!
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

YEAH! BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED IN GOING OUT WITH YOU!
B-BUT YOU SAID IT WAS OVER WITH MIDORI...
I AM DOING...
BUT I JUST LISTENED TO MY CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE ...
I'M DOING WHAT THE BOY WHO APPEARED AT THE CROSS-ROADS TOLD ME...
BUT WHAT ABOUT MY LOVE?
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT ...
NOT MY PROBLEM!
...AND WORRIED ABOUT MY OWN LOVE... I DID JUST WHAT HE SAID.
SO WHY... WHY...? DOES THIS MEAN I'LL NEVER FIND LOVE?
THAT DEATHLY BEAUTIFUL BOY. TALL... ALL IN BLACK... THAT SHARP PROFILE...AND HIS EARS WERE PIERCED. I DID JUST WHAT HE TOLD ME TO...

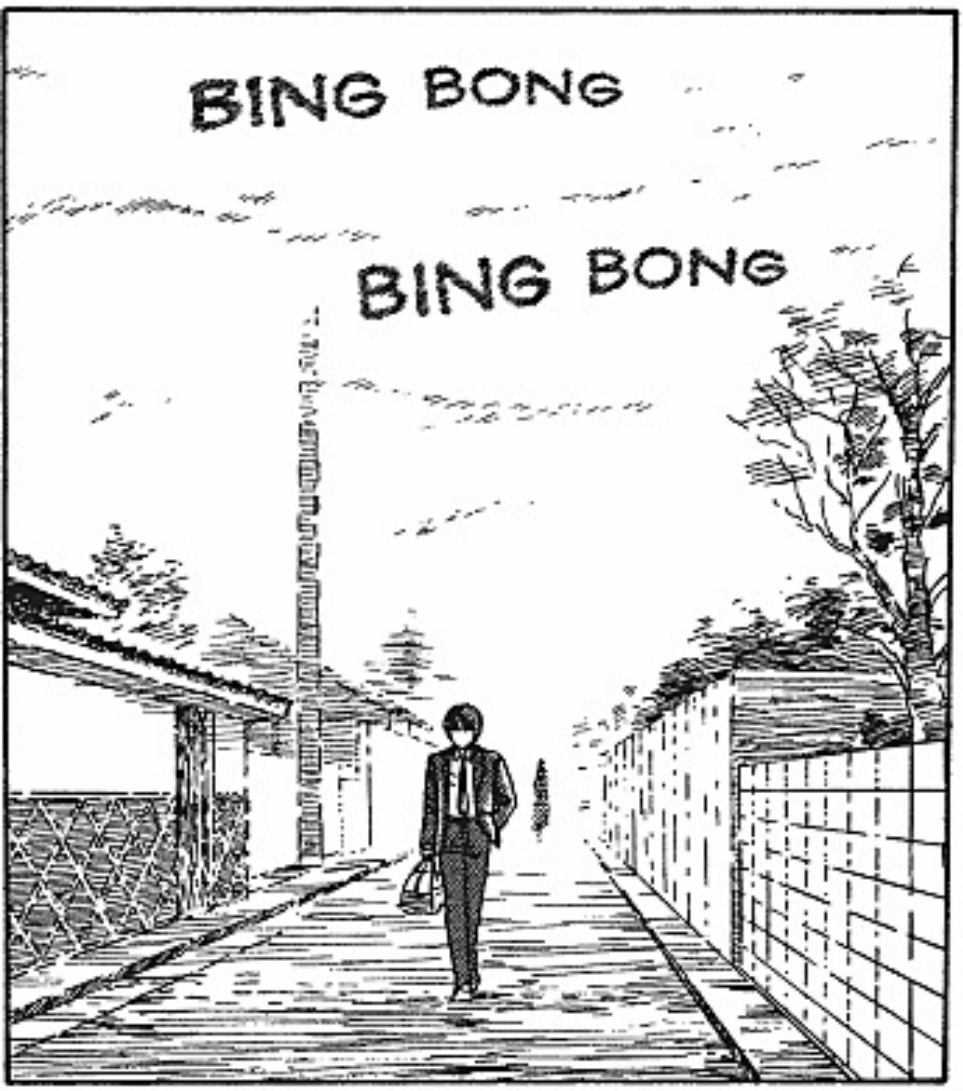

THAT'S NOT TRUE!
SUZUE
YOU'RE TRYING TO FORCE YOURSELF TO FIT INSIDE THE FORTUNE. YOU'RE MORE IN LOVE WITH THE IDEA OF LOVE THAN WITH ME.
YOU'RE TAK-ING THE CROSS-ROADS THING WAY TOO SERI-OUSLY.
SUZUE. CALM DOWN.
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIE.
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU, RYUSUKE.

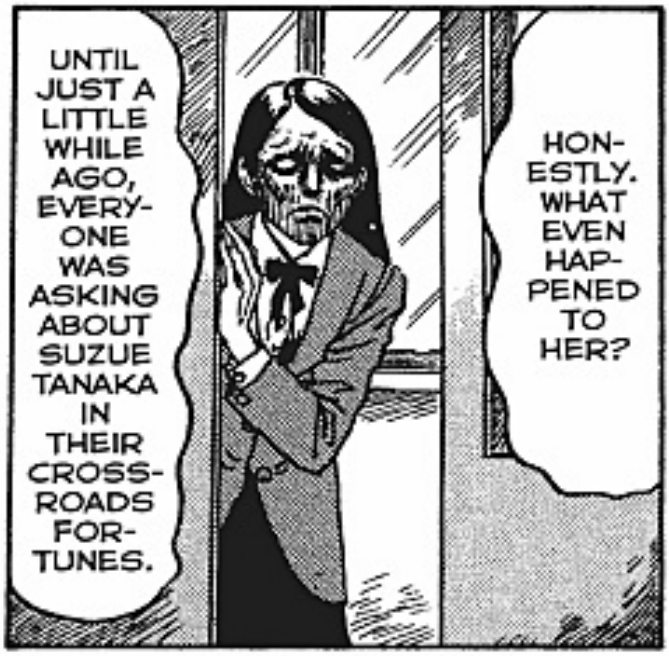
HEY, RYUSUKE! STARING OUT THE WINDOW AGAIN?
WHEN IT'S NICE, YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE TOWN, THOUGH.
YOU'RE KIND OF A WEIRDO.
YOU CAN'T SEE ANY-THING ON A DAY THIS FOGGY, THOUGH.
YOU DIDN'T HEAR? THAT'S ALL ANYONE'S TALKING ABOUT LATELY. THIS IS THE FOURTH ONE. ALL OF 'EM GETTING THEIR FORTUNES TOLD.
HUH?
THERE WAS ANOTHER SUICIDE IN AN INTERSECTION. GIRL FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL, I GUESS.
IT'S A PERFECT FOGGY DAY FOR A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE. OH, THAT REMINDS ME.
THE SCHOOL SAID NO MORE CROSSROADS FORTUNE-TELLING.

HE ALWAYS GIVES A BAD FORTUNE.
LIKE HE'S THE GOD OF DEATH.
AND LIKE... I GUESS SHE RAN INTO HIM, TOO, THAT BOY AT THE CROSSROADS OR WHATEVER THEY'RE CALLING HIM. HE WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO COME ALONG. BUT ALL THE GIRLS WERE IN DIFFERENT INTERSECTIONS.


LOOK BEHIND YOU.
YUP. SPEAKING OF...ANOTHER GOD OF DEATH'S PRACTICALLY BURNING A HOLE IN YOU WITH HER EYES.

GOD OF DEATH ...
THAT BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS ...


BING BONG
BING BONG

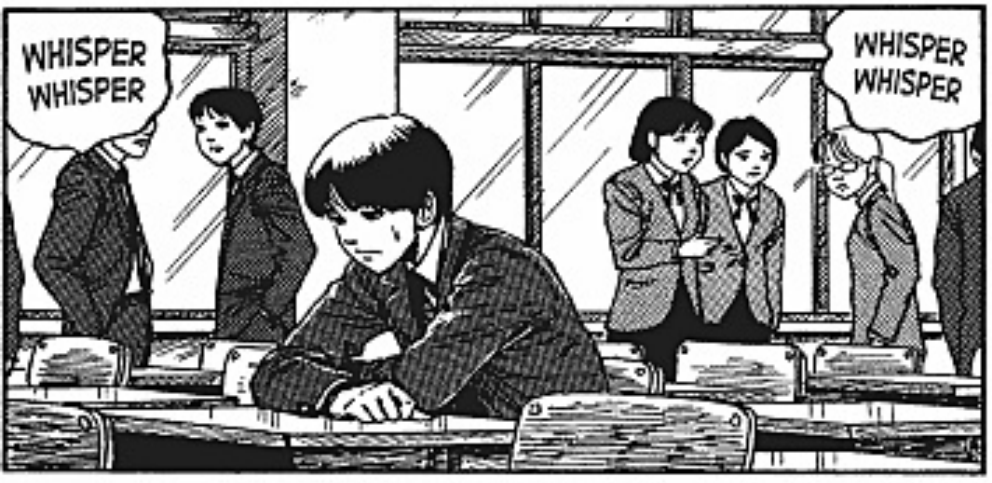

UNTIL JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, EVERY-ONE WAS ASKING ABOUT SUZUE TANAKA IN THEIR CROSS-ROADS FOR-TUNES.
HON-ESTLY. WHAT EVEN HAP-PENED TO HER?

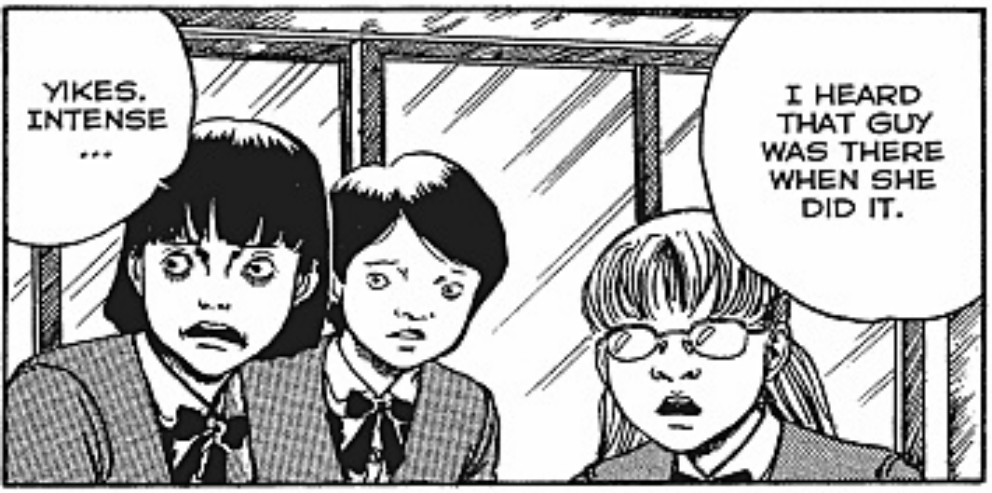
...

I DON'T ACTUALLY HATE YOU OR ANYTHING.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ALL THAT THIS MORNING. I'M SORRY.
I-I'M FINE.
SUZUE, ARE YOU OKAY? EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

BUT WE CAN BE FRIENDS, IF YOU WANT.
SO I CAN'T GO OUT WITH ANY OTHER GIRLS. ESPECIALLY NOT MIDORI'S BEST FRIEND...
I JUST CAN'T FORGET MIDORI.
MAYBE THIS HAPPENED TO YOU BECAUSE I DIDN'T MAKE THINGS CLEAR. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO TELL YOU NOW, THOUGH.
I SHOULD HAVE JUST TOLD YOU THEN. THE REASON WHY I WAS AVOIDING MIDORI.
THAT DAY...
SO I WILL... IT WAS EIGHT YEARS AGO...
BACK WHEN I LIVED IN THIS TOWN BEFORE ...

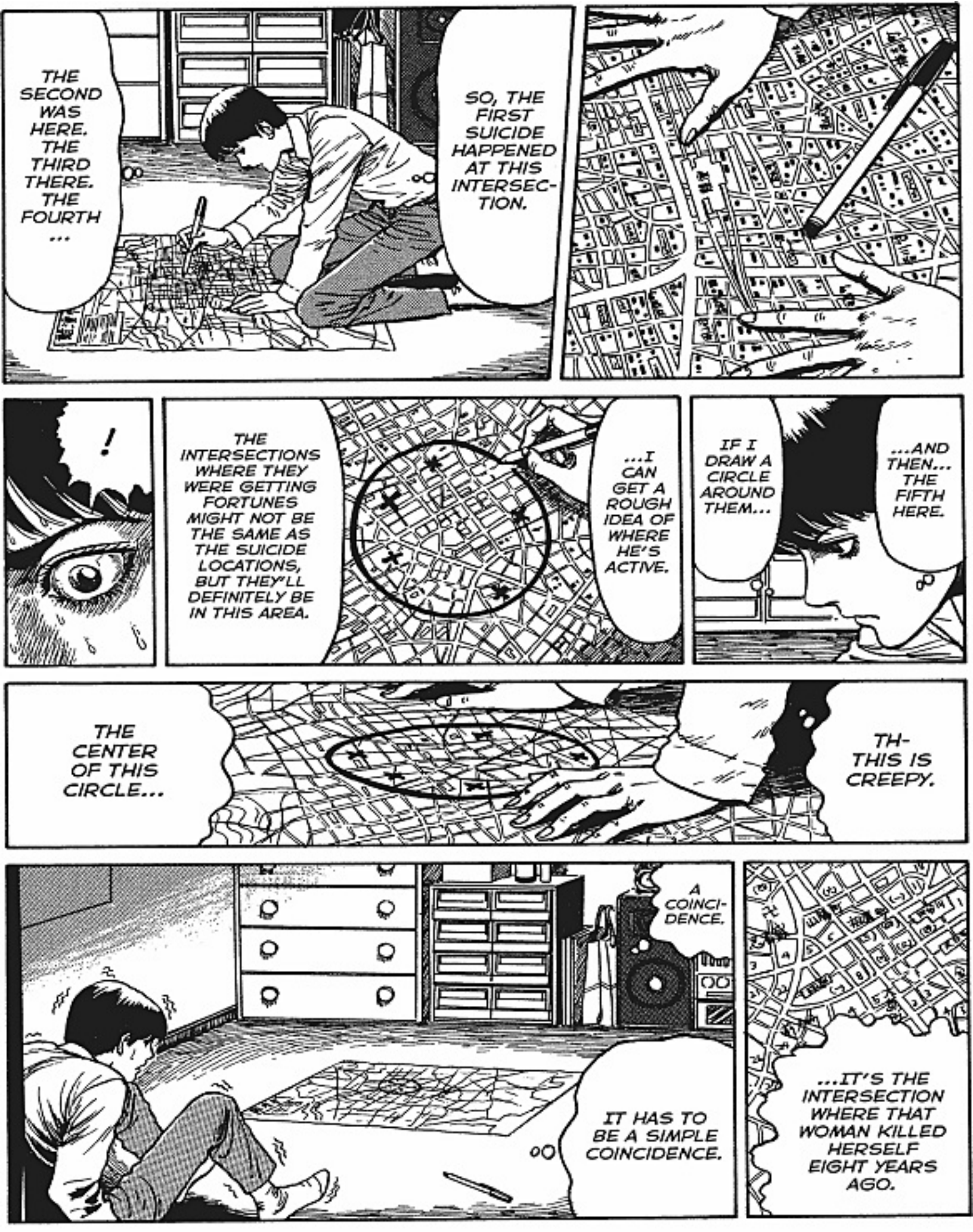
SUZUE!!


WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER


YIKES. INTENSE ...
I HEARD THAT GUY WAS THERE WHEN SHE DID IT.

THAT'S FIVE NOW. SUZUE TANAKA! SHE SAID SHE SAW THE CROSSROADS BOY, TOO.
WHO *IS* HE? I'M SURE IT HAS TO BE SOMEONE WHO LIVES HERE.

THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS ...
HE SHOWS UP WHEN PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR FORTUNES, SAYS SOMETHING NEGATIVE, AND LEAVES.
IT'S LIKE HE'S DOING THE SAME THING I DID WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
AND EVERYONE WHO MEETS HIM CUTS THEIR OWN THROAT IN THE INTER-SECTION...
THE SAME WAY THAT WOMAN DIED EIGHT YEARS AGO.
IT CAN'T BE A COIN-CIDENCE.
PLUS... HE STARTED SHOWING UP AT THE SAME TIME I MOVED BACK HERE. I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING.
AT ANY RATE...
...I DEFINITELY CAN'T JUST STAND BY AND DO NOTHING.
ARCADE
SHOP
SHOP
FLOWER FESTIVAL


THE SECOND WAS HERE. THE THIRD THERE. THE FOURTH ...
SO, THE FIRST SUICIDE HAPPENED AT THIS INTERSEC-TION.
!
THE INTERSECTIONS WHERE THEY WERE GETTING FORTUNES MIGHT NOT BE THE SAME AS THE SUICIDE LOCATIONS, BUT THEY'LL DEFINITELY BE IN THIS AREA.
...I CAN GET A ROUGH IDEA OF WHERE HE'S ACTIVE.
IF I DRAW A CIRCLE AROUND THEM...
...AND THEN... THE FIFTH HERE.
THE CENTER OF THIS CIRCLE...
TH-THIS IS CREEPY.
A COINCI-DENCE.
IT HAS TO BE A SIMPLE COINCIDENCE.
...IT'S THE INTERSECTION WHERE THAT WOMAN KILLED HERSELF EIGHT YEARS AGO.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS A MERE RUMOR. I WAS SURE HE EXISTED!
SO I WOULD HAVE TO CATCH HIM MYSELF.
I HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE POLICE INVESTIGATING THE CROSSROADS BOY FOR THE STRING OF SUICIDES.
DO YOU HAVE A SECOND ?
BUT HE NEVER SHOWED HIMSELF.
HE ALWAYS APPEARED AT DUSK ON FOGGY DAYS.
I MADE SURE TO PATROL THE INTER-SECTIONS DURING THAT TIME.
OH... UM...

BUT...
...I MAY HAVE TO ACTUALLY GIVE SOMEONE A FORTUNE.
...MAKES ME REMEMBER THAT WOMAN.
I JUST CAN'T. THE FORTUNE-TELLING...
HAAH ...
HAAH! HAAH!
THIS MIGHT BE A WAY TO FIGHT BACK UNTIL I CAN CATCH HIM.
I'LL DO THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THE GUY DOES.
I'LL TELL THEM SOMETHING HOPEFUL.
DESPITE THE RUMORS OF THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS, THERE WAS NO END TO THE FORTUNE SEEKERS.
...WHILE I SEARCHED FOR HIM.
I DECIDED TO TELL FORTUNES ...

NO DOUBT, THIS WAS BECAUSE OF MY FEELINGS OF GUILT TOWARD THE WOMAN I DROVE TO SUICIDE EIGHT YEARS EARLIER. I BECAME OBSESSED WITH TELLING FORTUNES.
I WAS AS SINCERE AS POSSIBLE.
BEFORE LONG ...
HOW-EVER ...
CROSS-ROADS FOR-TUNE?
HEY THERE ...
...

W-WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE COVERED IN BLOOD...

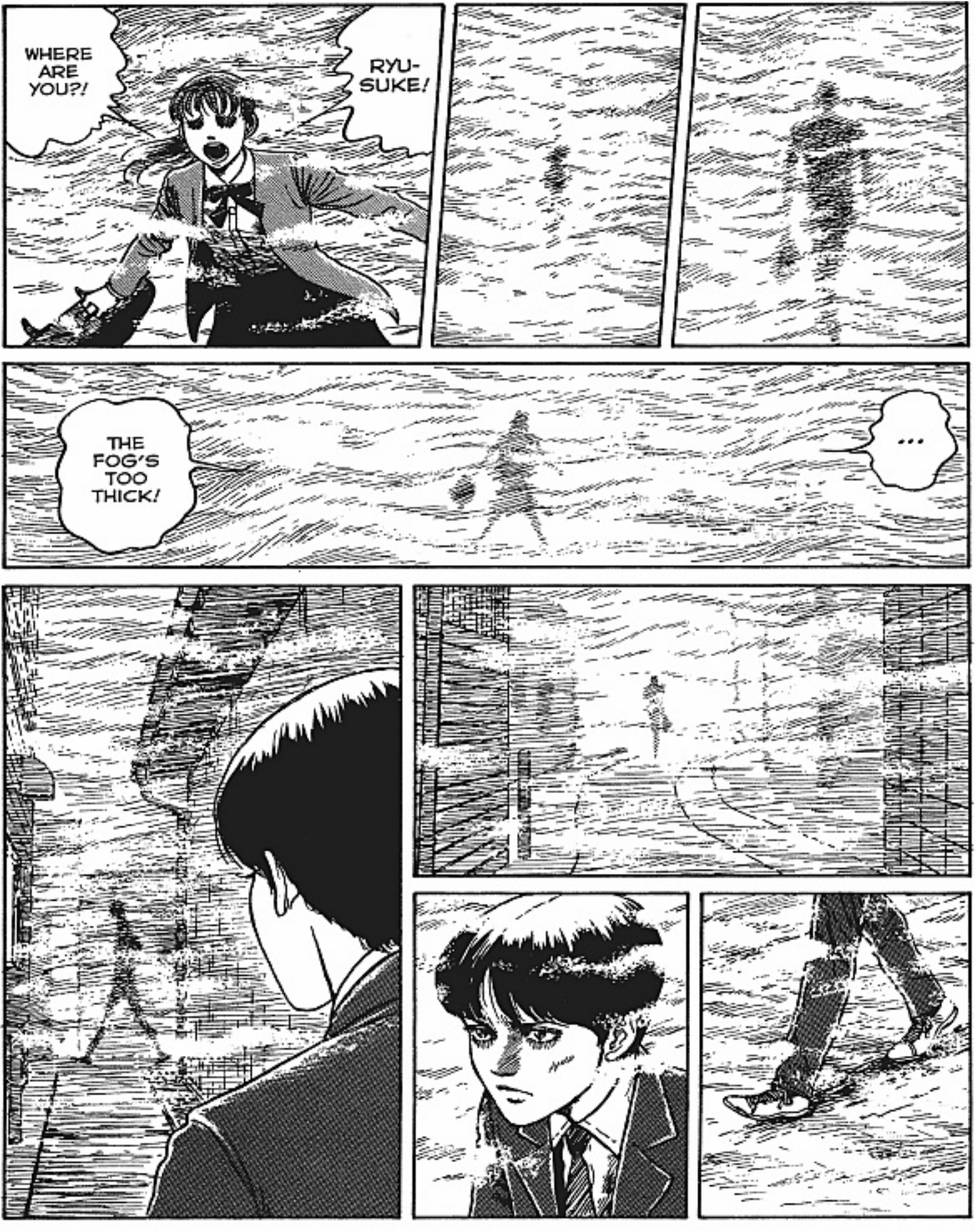
...
YOU'LL FIND LOVE...
Y-YOU WILL....
DO YOU THINK I'LL FIND LOVE ?
EXCUSE ME.
THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD STILL BE STANDING WITH HER THROAT SLICED OPEN LIKE THAT.
R-RIDICU-LOUS ...
...
I-IT CAN'T BE.
S-SO THEN WHAT ON EARTH...

...
...AMONG THE PEOPLE I TOLD FORTUNES FOR.
AFTER THAT, I SAW SEVERAL GIRLS COVERED IN BLOOD...
I WAS SURE THEY WERE THE GIRLS WHO HAD KILLED THEMSELVES IN THE INTERSECTIONS.
AND THEN I GOT PROOF ...

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIE!
I LOVE YOU!
SUZUE...
EVEN SO, I COULDN'T STOP PATROLLING INTERSEC-TIONS.
S-SUZUE... FORGIVE ME...

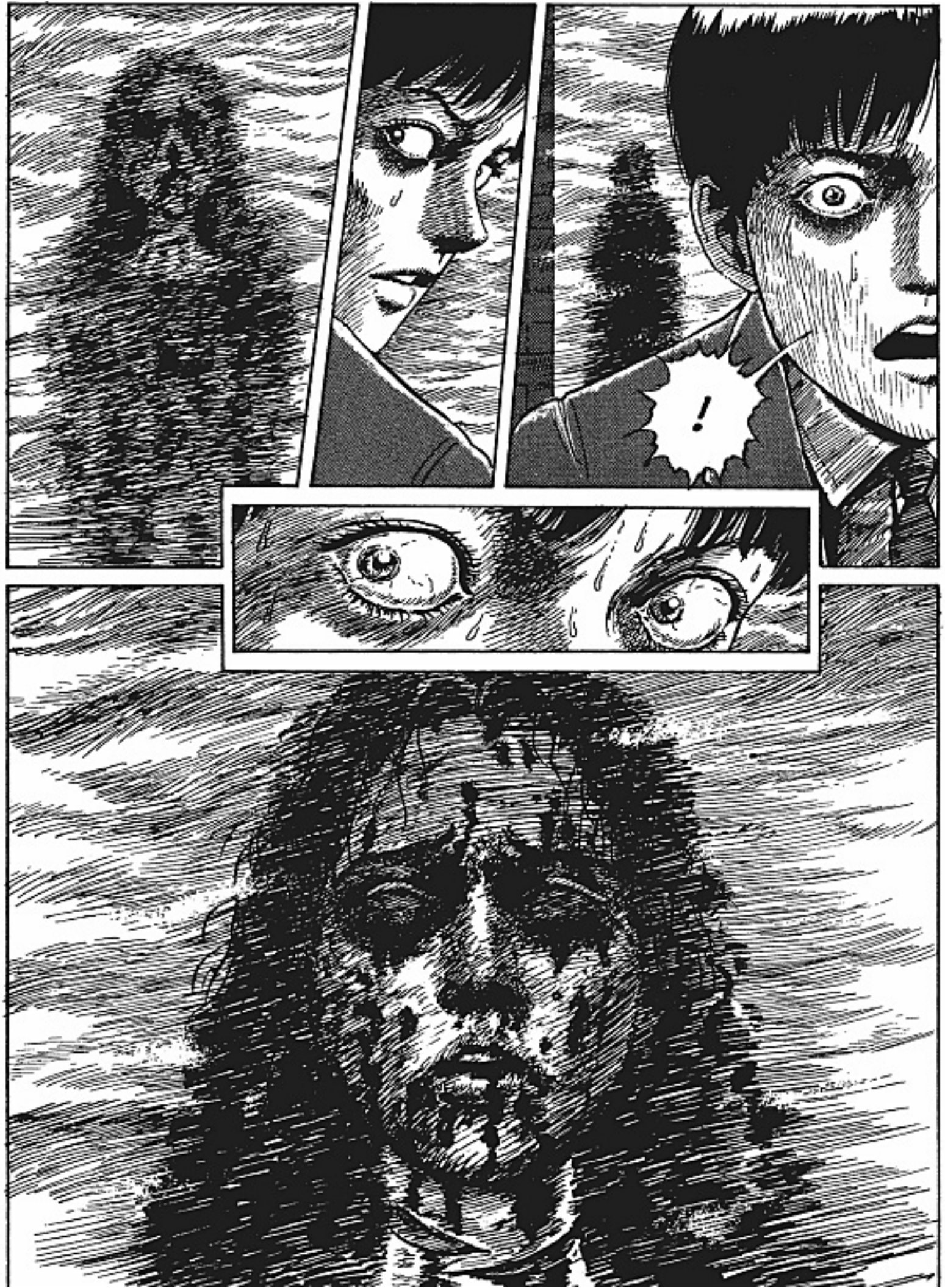
RYU-SUKE!
BING BONG
BING BONG
MIDORI.
YOU'RE SO WORN OUT.
I CAN'T JUST WATCH QUIETLY ANYMORE.
TELL ME WHY... WHY YOU WOULD GO SO FAR?
I KNOW, YOU KNOW. THAT YOU'RE GOING AROUND LOOKING FOR FORTUNE SEEKERS.
ARE YOU PATROLLING THE TOWN AGAIN TODAY?
LIKE YOU'RE POS-SESSED.

I CAN'T STOP UNTIL I CATCH HIM—THE CROSSROADS BOY.
I'M NOT WORN OUT.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
SLAP
!
IS HE POSSESSED BY HIM, TOO, THE WAY SUZUE WAS?
CATCH THE CROSSROADS BOY? RYUSUKE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE...
RYUSUKE!
DON'T GO!
NO! RYUSUKE!


WHERE ARE YOU?!
RYU-SUKE!
THE FOG'S TOO THICK!
...

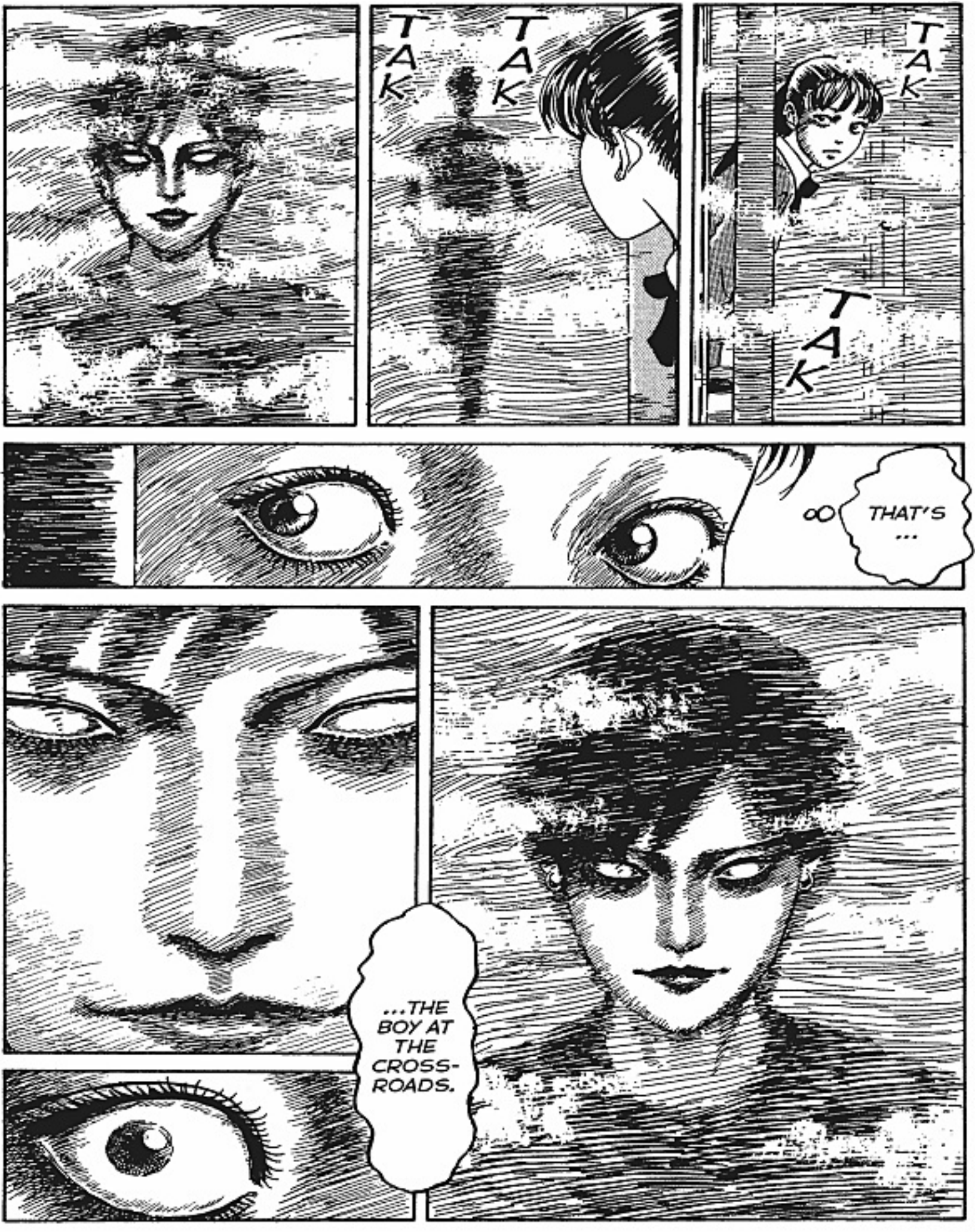
...
IT'S HIM!
TALL, DRESSED IN BLACK, PIERCED EARS.
STOP!
STOP!

WHERE AM I?
WHERE...
DAMMIT. I LOST HIM.
HAAH! HAAH!
AH!
THIS IS...
I DIDN'T REALIZE I'D COME THIS FAR.
...THE INTER-SECTION FROM EIGHT YEARS AGO.



Y-YOU ARE...
I WAS WRONG. I'M SORRY.
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
...

RYUSUKE!
RYUSUKE!
I'M LOST.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THIS IS.
IT'S NO USE... WHERE AM I EVEN?
SOME-ONE'S COMING.
AH!


TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
oO
THAT'S ...
...THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS.

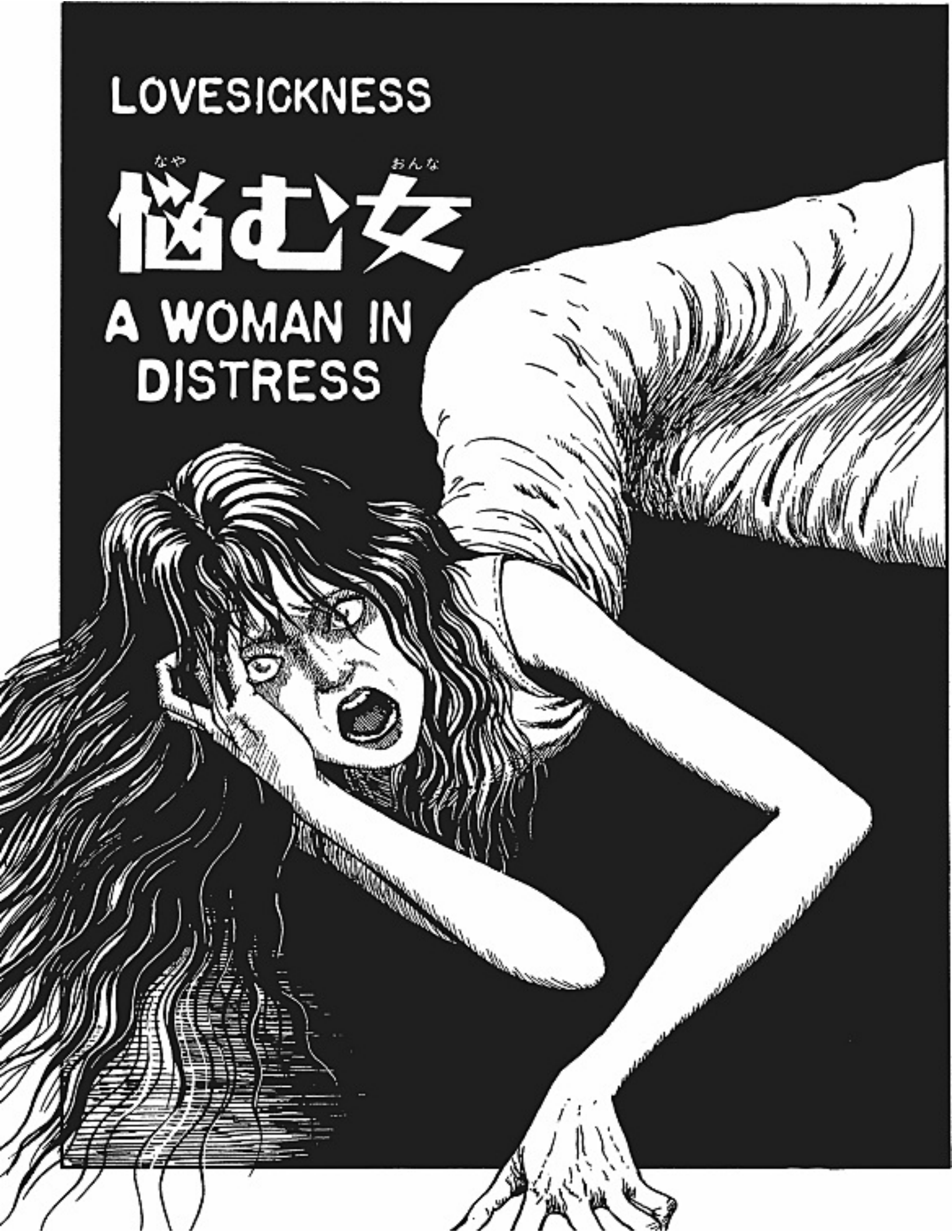
TAK
I'M NOT.
I'M NOT...
I'M NOT!
NO! I...
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR MY FORTUNE, THOUGH!
AH!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT?
RYUSUKE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

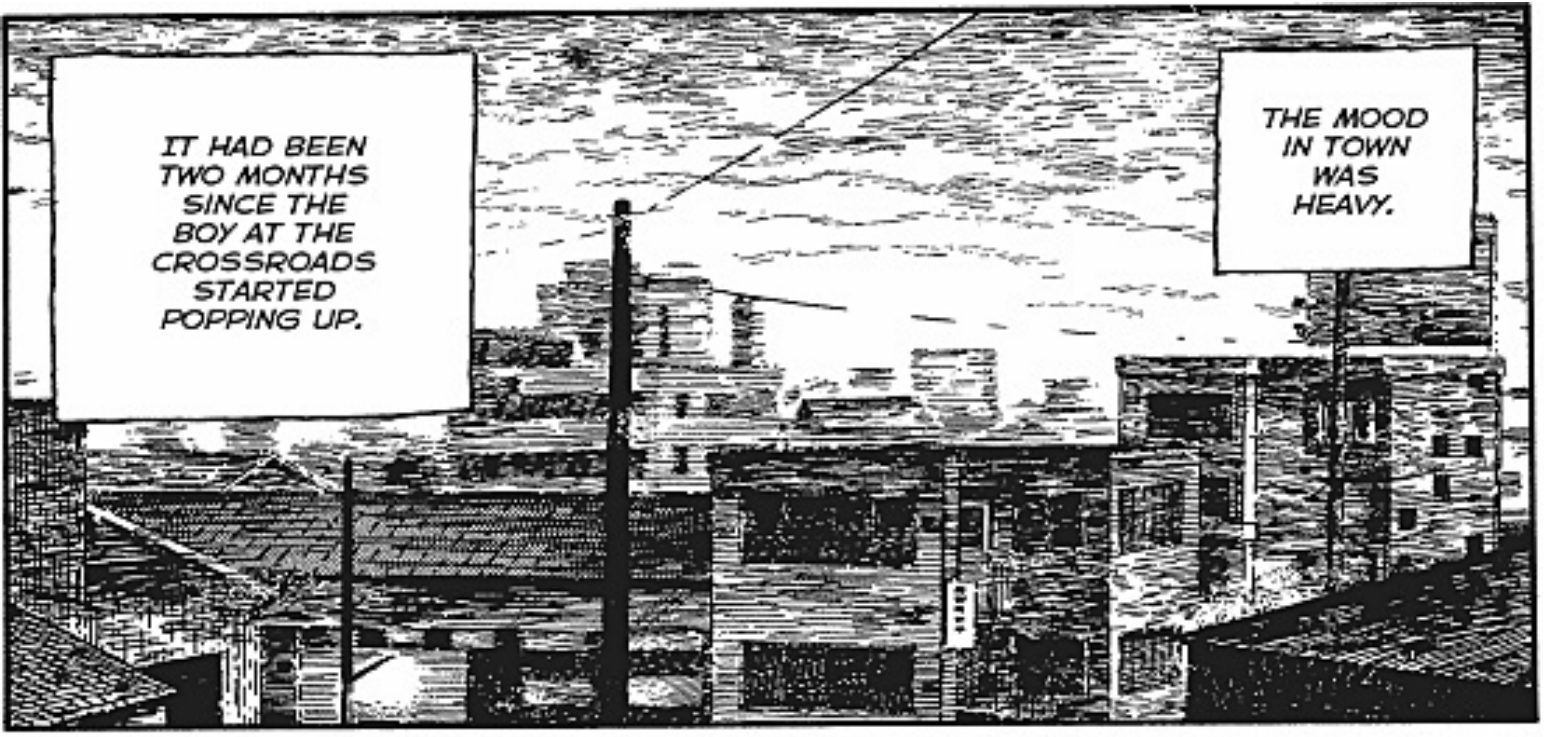
LOOK!
WHAT?!
HE'S HERE... HE'S HERE! THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS!
SOME-ONE POINT-ED FOR ME TO COME THIS WAY, SO I DID.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
BUT HE WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
AND THE FOG THAT HAD BEEN SO THICK CLEARED AWAY LIKE IT HAD NEVER BEEN THERE AT ALL.
THE BEAUTIFUL BOY AT THE CROSSROADS/END

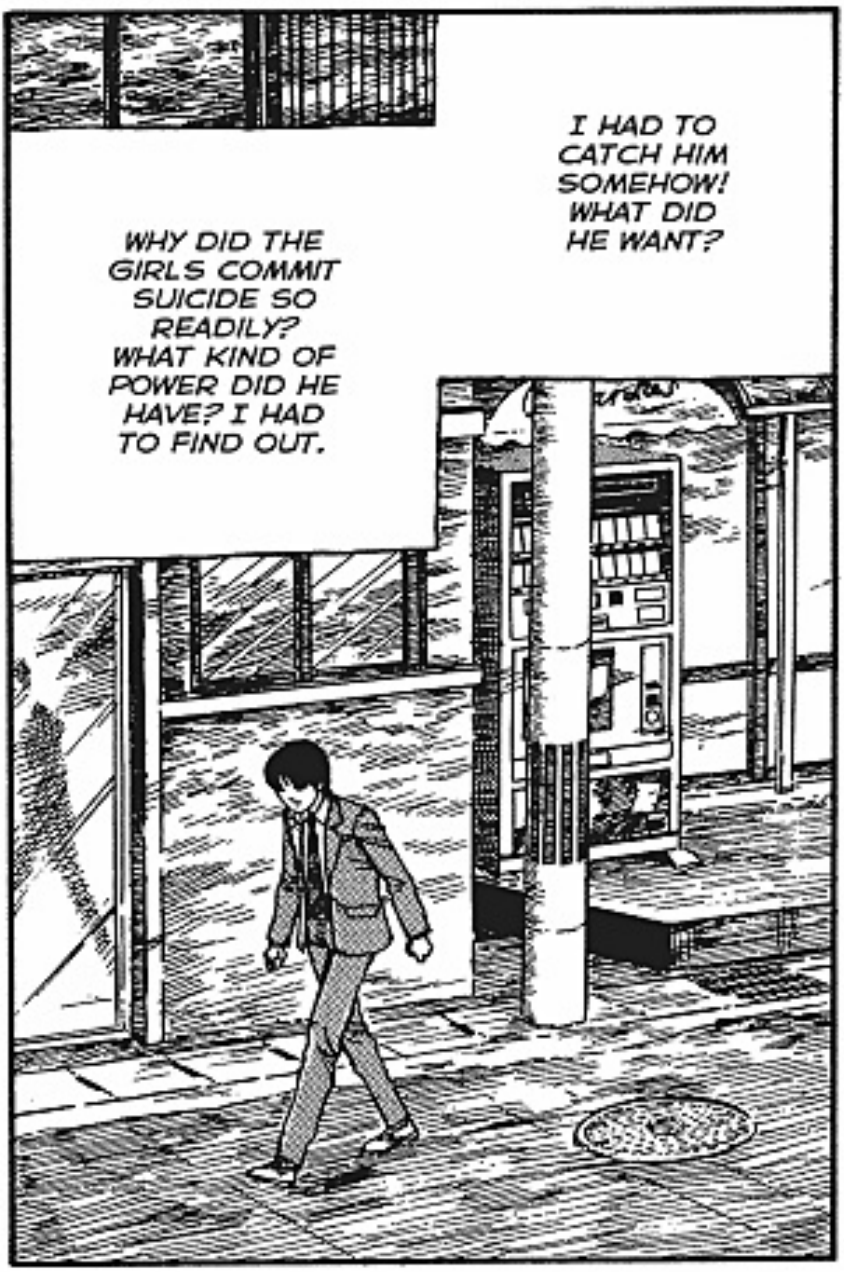
LOVESICKNESS

悩む女 (なやおんな)

A WOMAN IN DISTRESS




IT HAD BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS STARTED POPPING UP.
THE MOOD IN TOWN WAS HEAVY.


WHY DID THE GIRLS COMMIT SUICIDE SO READILY? WHAT KIND OF POWER DID HE HAVE? I HAD TO FIND OUT.
I HAD TO CATCH HIM SOMEHOW! WHAT DID HE WANT?

HE GAVE CRUEL FORTUNES TO GIRLS ASKING FOR DIVINATION AT THE CROSS-ROADS...
...AND SIX OF THEM COMMITTED SUICIDE.

I SAID I'D ALWAYS COME WITH YOU NOW, DIDN'T I?!
WAIT! I'M COMING, TOO, RYUSUKE!
OF COURSE.
IT'S JUST, I'M WORRIED! YOU'RE TRYING TO CATCH THE CROSSROADS BOY, RIGHT?!
MIDORI... IT MUST BE BORING, THOUGH.
LEAVE ME ALONE.
NO. I'M COMING WITH YOU.
GETTING MIXED UP WITH HIM IS TOO DANGEROUS. YOU SHOULD STOP.
I DON'T THINK HE'S HUMAN.

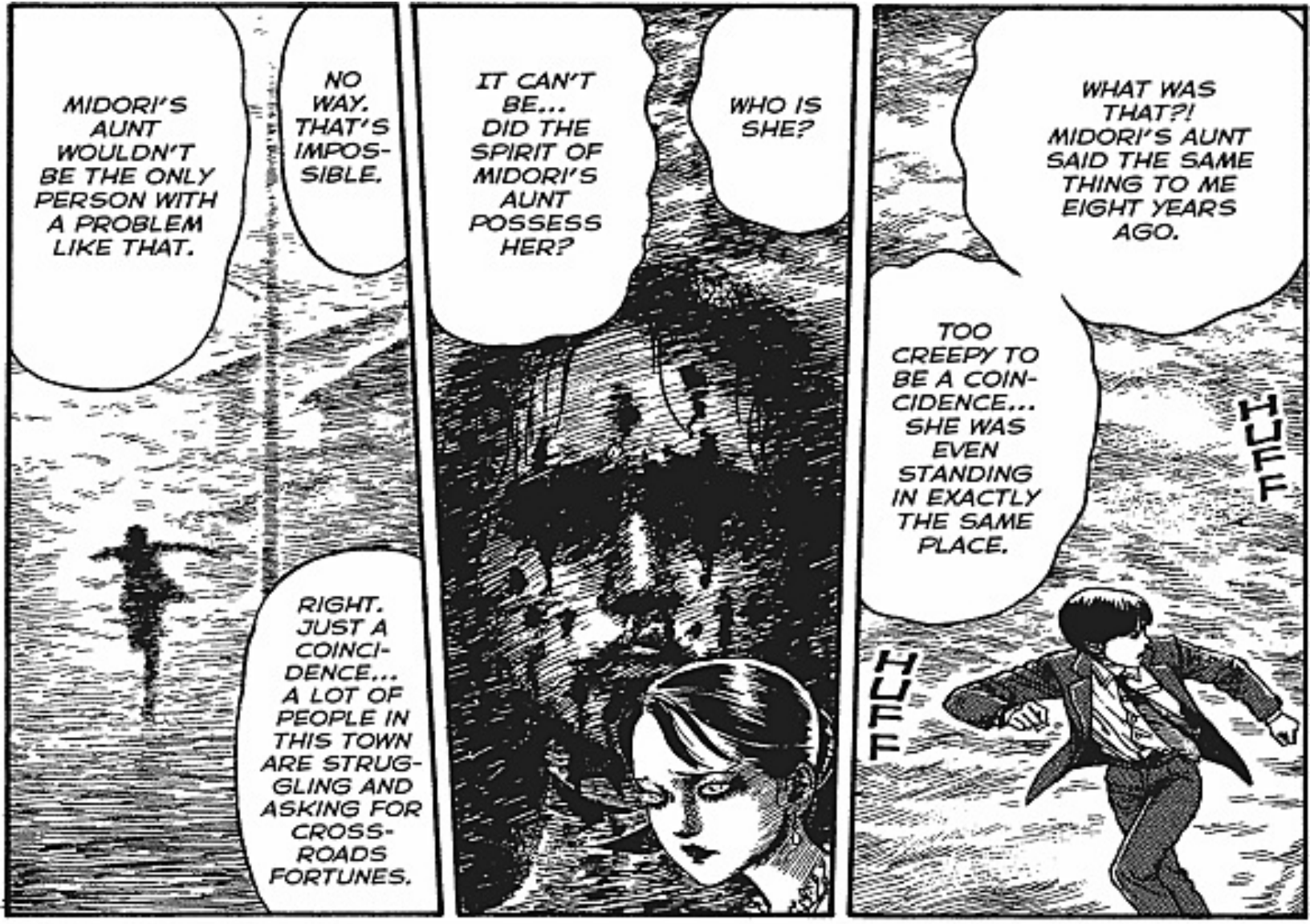
...WHY FLOWERS?
BUT ...
I GOT THEM AT THE FLORIST.
OH... PRETTY, RIGHT?
GLAZUE
GLAZUE
...
OH. I WAS GOING TO PLACE THEM ON THE SPOT WHERE MY AUNT DIED.
I KNOW YOU'LL SAY IT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE.
BUT I'M REALLY GRATEFUL.
YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY NOW OF ALL TIMES.
WELL, YOU KNOW... YOU SAVED ME FROM THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS BEFORE, RIGHT?

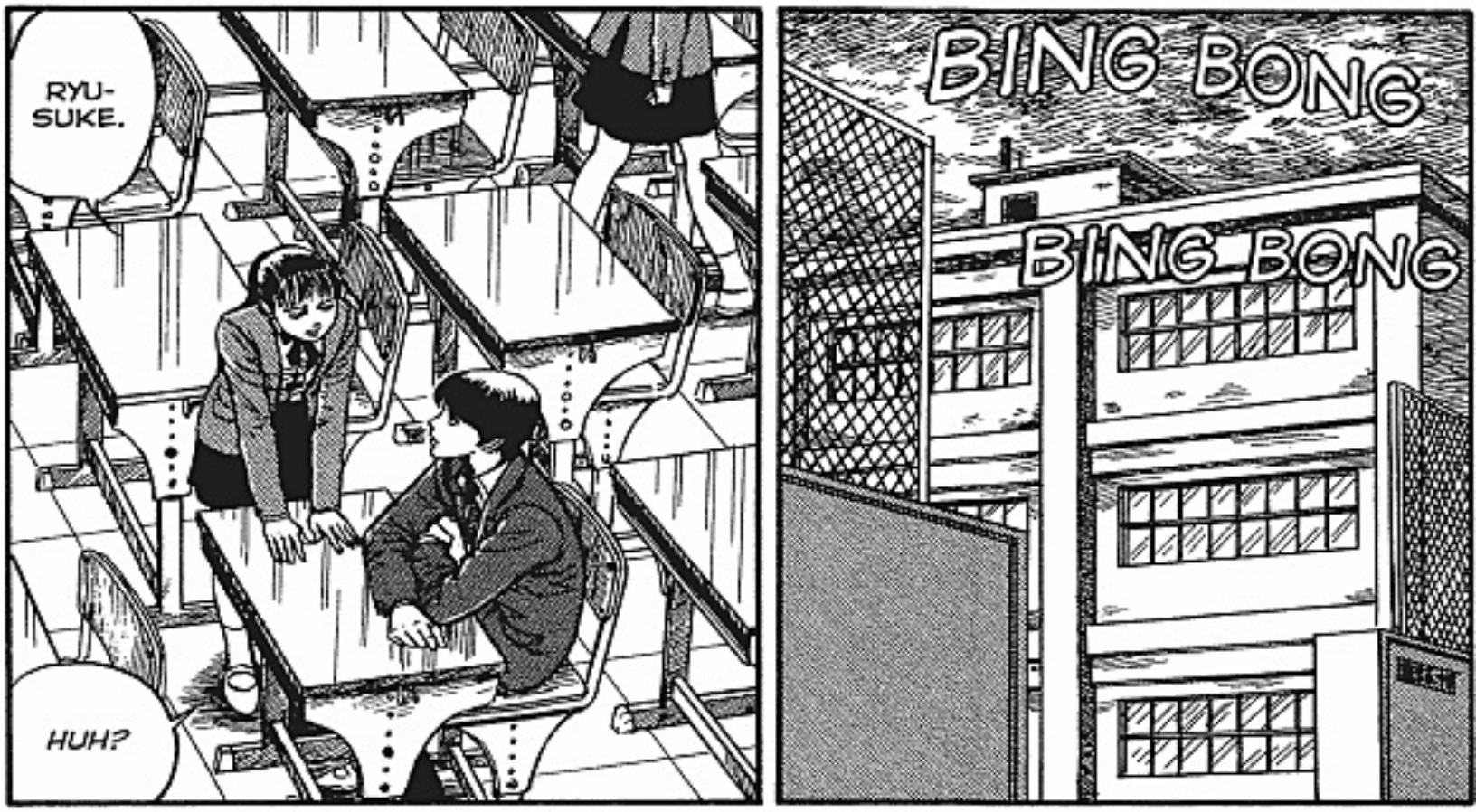
THE GHOST OF MIDORI'S AUNT.
I WAS TERRIBLY AFRAID OF GOING BACK. I KNEW I'D SEEN HER THERE THAT DAY.
BUT I FELT LIKE I HAD TO GO BACK.
I JUST GET THAT FEELING.
LIKE MAYBE THAT COINCIDENCE WAS HER WATCHING OVER ME.
AND THEN I FIGURED I SHOULD BE THANKING MY AUNT, TOO.
SO I WANTED TO THANK HER. WILL YOU COME WITH ME, RYUSUKE? PLEASE!
YES. THIS IS DEFINITELY THE SPOT. SO SHE REALLY WAS MIDORI'S AUNT...

ABOUT HOW IT'S MY FAULT HER AUNT KILLED HERSELF HERE EIGHT YEARS AGO.
I STILL HAVEN'T TOLD MIDORI THE TRUTH.
AH!
...

I THOUGHT IT WAS HER...
WHAT THE... SHE SCARED ME.
...
SAY... WOULD YOU HEAR ME OUT?
I'M SEEKING A CROSSROADS FORTUNE. TELL ME THE ANSWER TO MY PROBLEMS.
YOU SEE, I'M IN LOVE. I'M IN LOVE WITH THIS MAN.
BUT... IT'S A FORBID-DEN LOVE.

AAH, I WANT TO HAVE IT.
HIS BABY...
BUT MY BOY-FRIEND! HE TOLD ME TO GET RID OF IT!
AFTER ALL, HE HAS A WIFE AND CHIL-DREN... BUT, WELL...
...BUT THERE'S A BABY INSIDE OF ME.
WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO?
SO... YOU TWO...
AAAAH!
HM ?!


MIDORI'S AUNT WOULDN'T BE THE ONLY PERSON WITH A PROBLEM LIKE THAT.
NO WAY. THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
RIGHT. JUST A COINCIDENCE... A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN ARE STRUGGLING AND ASKING FOR CROSSROADS FORTUNES.
IT CAN'T BE... DID THE SPIRIT OF MIDORI'S AUNT POSSESS HER?
WHO IS SHE?
WHAT WAS THAT?! MIDORI'S AUNT SAID THE SAME THING TO ME EIGHT YEARS AGO.
TOO CREEPY TO BE A COINCIDENCE... SHE WAS EVEN STANDING IN EXACTLY THE SAME PLACE.
HUFF
HUFF


RYUSUKE.
HUH?
BING BONG
BING BONG

WELL, THANKS TO YOU, I HAD A TERRIBLE WEEKEND.
YEAH, SORRY. I WASN'T FEELING GOOD.
ON FRI-DAY.
YOU WERE AWFUL TO JUST RUN OFF BY YOUR-SELF.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. BUT I FELT LIKE SHE WAS IN THE SAME POSITION AS MY AUNT SO I COULDN'T WALK AWAY FROM HER.
THAT WOMAN KEPT PESTERING ME ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT SHE SHOULD HAVE HER LOVER'S CHILD.
HUH? WHY?
MOM TOLD HER TO STAY THE NIGHT AND EVEN LAID OUT A FUTON, BUT SHE IGNORED HER AND KEPT ON TALKING.
MOM SAT DOWN TO TALK WITH HER TOO, BUT SHE JUST WASN'T HAVING IT.
SO? WHAT SHOULD I DO? ...HM?
THAT WAS MY FIRST MISTAKE.
I BROUGHT HER HOME TO TALK. I WANTED TO GIVE HER SOME REAL ADVICE IF I COULD.
IT WAS LIKE THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE IN HER HEAD.

YOU'RE RIGHT. ...I'LL HAVE IT.
AND SHE LEFT.
FINE... HAVE THE BABY! THAT'S THE ONLY OPTION!
FINALLY, IT WAS MIDNIGHT, AND SHE STILL WOULDN'T STOP, SO I TOLD HER...
HEY? I KNOW I SAID I'D HAVE IT YESTERDAY, BUT I'M NOT SURE. SHOULD I REALLY HAVE IT? AAH, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
SHE CAME OVER THE NEXT DAY, TOO! AND PESTERED ME UNTIL TWO IN THE MORNING!
BUT THAT'S NOT THE END OF IT!
HUH. WEIRD LADY.
THERE'S NO WAY THIS IS NORMAL, RIGHT?
SHE'S SO WEIRD...
THE POOR THING!
I MEAN, IF I DO HAVE IT, THE BABY WON'T HAVE A FATHER.

I DID NOT OPEN THE DOOR.
BANG
BANG
HELLO... MIDORI, OPEN THE DOOR!
I GUESS SHE'S HONESTLY STRUGGLING.
YEAH... YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT SOUNDS AWFUL, MIDORI.
BUT SHE WAS STILL BANGING ON THE DOOR IN THE EVENING.
I THOUGHT SHE'D GIVE UP AND GO AWAY IF I IGNORED HER.
BANG
BANG
COME ON... TALK TO ME... I WANT TO HAVE THE BABY... BUT THE POOR THING...
BUT THERE ARE LIMITS! THE WORST PART WAS AFTER THAT. SHE CAME AGAIN YESTERDAY!
KLATTER
YOU THERE! GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF! IF YOU KEEP THIS UP, I'LL CALL THE POLICE!
FINALLY, EVEN MY QUIET DAD HAD HAD ENOUGH. HE STARTED YELLING AT HER!

I'M PREG-NANT!
THIS IS NO JOKE! WE DON'T NEED THE POLICE HERE!
THE POLICE ?
W-WHAT?
OH! FINE! I'LL SETTLE MYSELF DOWN!
HOW ABOUT YOU ACT LIKE IT AND SETTLE YOURSELF DOWN?!
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
AH!

IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WHAM
WHAM
STOP... STOP IT!
WHAM
WHAM
UNH!
UNNNNH!
CRASH
UNNNNH!
YOU! AH, SEE! I TOLD YOU! ARE YOU OKAY? HANG ON!
UNNNNH!
UNNNNH!
UNNNNH!

SHE WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY... BUT...
SO THEN WHAT ABOUT HER?
MY DAD SAID THEY COULDN'T SAVE THE BABY.
CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT, RYUSUKE?! THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED.
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS.
SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT WITH HER FROM THE START! NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID, IT WOULD'VE ENDED UP THE SAME.
MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT SHE DID THAT.
HEY... RYU-SUKE? MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT.
IT'S JUST, IF I HADN'T ASKED HER TO THE HOUSE, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MIDORI?! HOW COULD THIS BE YOUR FAULT?!

WHICH REMINDED ME. THEY'D FOUND A SEVENTH SUICIDE YESTER-DAY.
THERE WERE MORE AND MORE SACRIFICES TO THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS.
UMI CITY, KAWANO
WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THIS TOWN?
I FELT LIKE EVERYONE IN THIS TOWN GOT SWALLOWED UP IN THEIR PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY ON FOGGY DAYS.
IF WE DON'T HURRY, HE'LL DISAPPEAR SOMEWHERE!
I GOT A MESSAGE FROM YUMI!
REALLY ?!
SHE SAID IT'S ALMOST FOR SURE HIM.
SHE SAID SHE FOUND THE BOY AT THE NISHIHATA-MACHI INTERSEC-TION!

WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?!
WHAT?!
I HAVE TO GO AFTER THEM.
IT'S DANGER-OUS! YOU SHOULDN'T GOOOOO!
HEEEEY! GIRLS!
I LOST THEM.
WHERE'S THE INTER-SECTION IN NISHIHATA-MACHI?
DAMMIT. IF ONLY I HAD A MAP.
PEOPLE ARE COMMITTING SUICIDE, THOUGH. WHAT ARE THEY EVEN THINKING?
I DID HEAR THAT A BUNCH OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RUNNING AROUND TRYING TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HIM.
DON'T THEY KNOW HOW DANGEROUS CONTACT WITH HIM IS?

AH!
GRAB
OH!
IT'S YOU...

I'M IN A HURRY RIGHT NOW!
UM. I'M SORRY.
YOU... YOU WERE HERE BEFORE, RIGHT?
SO I'M DOING A CROSSROADS FORTUNE... LISTEN TO ME.
THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO THE TEMPLE?
I'M NOT SURE WHAT KIND OF MEMORIAL I SHOULD HAVE FOR THE BABY.
LISTEN. I HAD A MISCARRIAGE.
I WON'T TAKE MUCH OF YOUR TIME.
BUT...
I KILLED MY BABY. I'M NO GOOD AS A MOTHER.
MAYBE MY BABY FORGIVES ME...? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OH... YOU'RE RIGHT. I DID SOMETHING INEXCUSABLE TO MY BABY.

I'M SURE... YOUR BABY FORGIVES YOU.
UM. I REALLY AM IN A HURRY. PLEASE LET GO.
I WONDER? YOU CAN'T KNOW THAT FOR SURE.
MY BABY MIGHT BE ON THE OTHER SIDE HATING ME...
IT'S JUST...A MOTHER IS EVERYTHING TO A BABY.
I'M SURE YOUR BABY FORGIVES YOU.
...
WHY DO YOU THINK SHE FORGIVES ME? WHAT PROOF DO YOU HAVE?
AAAAH!
THUD
I WONDER ...
EVEN A TERRIBLE MOTHER LIKE ME?
...

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
AAAAAH! I DON'T KNOW!
ROLL
ROLL
HOW CAN I LIVE?!
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
WHAT IF SHE HATES ME?!
SHE REALLY IS WEIRD...
AAAAAH!
AAAA-AAAH!
...

BUT I COULDN'T FIND HIM ANYWHERE IN NISHIHATA-MACHI.
AFTER THAT, I HURRIED HOME TO GRAB A MAP AND THEN WENT ON THE HUNT.
ISHIX
IT'S LATE. I GUESS I'LL HEAD BACK.
RYUSUKE, YOU HAVE A GUEST. I SHOWED HER UP TO YOUR ROOM.
SLAM
I'M HOME.
KLAT
TER
WHO COULD IT BE?

AH!
I FOLLOWED YOU.
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I...?
SHE ENDED UP STAYING WELL INTO THE NIGHT.
AAH, I JUST DON'T KNOW.
AAAH, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?
AND THEN SHE PICKED UP WHERE SHE'D LEFT OFF.
WHEN I CAME TO GET THE MAP.
R- RIGHT.

AND THEN SHE LEFT.
SHE'S NOT ACTU-ALLY ...
...GOING TO COME BACK TOMORROW, IS SHE?
GOOD EVE-NING.
KLATTER
...SHE STARTED USING THE GUTTERS ON THE HOUSE TO CLIMB UP INTO MY ROOM.
I COULDN'T BE ANGRY WITH THIS WOMAN AND HER BIZARRE BEHAVIOR ...
... BECAUSE OF HOW GUILTY I FELT ABOUT MIDORI'S AUNT.
RYUSUKE? LISTEN... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
HE SAID HE WANTS TO BREAK UP WITH ME... OUT OF THE BLUE, TODAY... I... WHAT SHOULD I DO?
BINGO.
KLAK
KLAK
SHE CAME EVERY NIGHT AFTER THAT.
AND WHEN WE STARTED NOT LETTING HER IN...
KLOOK
KLOOK

NO!!
NO!
I'D RATHER DIE THAN BREAK UP WITH HIM!
MAYBE YOU COULD TAKE THIS CHANCE TO LEAVE?
AT ANY RATE, HE HAS A WIFE AND KIDS.
TELL ME...
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO?
THERE'S NOTHING YOU *CAN* DO, IS THERE?
I HATE THIS. WHAT DO YOU THINK I SHOULD DO?
BUT APPARENTLY, HE *DOES* LOVE HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.
HE SAID HE LOVED ME MORE THAN ANYONE!
YOU WERE PROBABLY THINKING ABOUT THIS ALL DAY, WEREN'T YOU? CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING ELSE TO CLEAR YOUR MIND?
AND I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS MOPING AROUND ANYWAY!
YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S NO HOPE?! YOU'RE SO HEARTLESS!
MAYBE I'M HEARTLESS, BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANYWHERE AGONIZING OVER THIS.

ALL RIGHT. FINE. I WON'T DISCUSS IT WITH YOU ANYMORE.
WITH A MERE CHILD!
...
YOU'RE JUST A CHILD. HOW DARE YOU!
W-WHAT?
GOOD EVE-NING.
KLAT
TER
BUT THE NEXT NIGHT ...
WHAT A RIDE...
PHEW!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO... I'M IN SUCH TROUBLE.
AAAH, RYUSUKE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T COME ANYMORE, THOUGH ?!
W-WHAT ?!

I KILLED HIM.
I... HIS SON...
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?
I MEAN...WITH HIM OUT OF THE WAY, MAYBE MY BOYFRIEND AND I CAN WORK THINGS OUT?
I KIDNAPPED HIM FROM KINDERGARTEN AND STRANGLED HIM TO DEATH THIS MORNING.
WHAT?
W—
I WOULDN'T JOKE ABOUT THIS!
YOU'RE KIDDING.
NOW I'M AN ACTUAL MURDERER.
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? WHAT IF THE POLICE FIND OUT?
BUT... AAAH... THIS...
I HID THE BODY SOMEWHERE NO ONE WILL FIND IT.

BUT THE FOLLOW-ING NIGHT...
KNOCK KNOCK
IS SHE GOING TO COME AGAIN TOMORROW? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?
DID SHE REALLY KILL THAT KID?
I COULDN'T SLEEP THAT NIGHT.
THE WOMAN AGONIZED AND MOANED IN MY ROOM UNTIL 2 A.M. BEFORE FINALLY LEAVING.
BUT THOSE HURT, RIGHT? AND WHAT WOULD HE THINK? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HEY, RYUSUKE, I'M THINKING OF GETTING A TATTOO.
RYUSUKE, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
AAAH, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?
...
SO? WHAT DO YOU THINK? HM?
GAPE
KOICHIRO'S HIS NAME. I WANT TO SHOW ON MY BODY JUST HOW MUCH I CARE FOR HIM.
I WANT TO GET "KOICHIRO FOR LIFE" HERE IN BIG CHARACTERS.

RYUSUKE! WAIT UP!
I CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS... ANY SYMPATHY I FELT IS GONE.
BING BONG
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? IS SHE A MURDERER?!
BING BONG
IS SHE JUST MESSING WITH ME?
PARKING
I TOLD YOU NOT TO GO BY YOURSELF ANYMORE. YOU'RE DOING THE INTERSEC-TIONS AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
DEAD MAN?
YEAH. CUZ YOU NEVER SAY ANYTHING AND LOOK LIKE YOU'RE DEAD.
COULD YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?
YEAH... MIDORI ...
DO YOU KNOW PEOPLE IN CLASS ARE CALLING YOU "DEAD MAN"?
NO WAY. I CAN'T DO THAT.

YOU'RE WEIRD, RYUSUKE. TOTALLY. SOMETHING'S UP WITH YOU. I JUST KNOW YOU'RE POSSESSED BY THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS.
THAT'S IT. YOU'RE POSSESSED! THAT'S WHY I'M WATCHING OVER YOU! SO YOU DON'T COMMIT SUICIDE!
OH, I GET IT. DEAD MAN, HUH...
SHOULDN'T IT ACTUALLY BOTHER YOU?!
YOU HAVE TO ACTUALLY EAT.
RYUSUKE, YOU'VE LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT AGAIN.
NO!
THEY'RE NOT PICKING ON YOU AT SCHOOL, ARE THEY?
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'VE BEEN A GLOOMY GUS EVER SINCE WE MOVED HERE.

GOOD-NESS. THAT'S NOT FAR FROM HERE.
AROUND TWO THIS AFTERNOON, THE BODY OF A RECENTLY MISSING CHILD WAS FOUND IN THE GRASS IN THE FLOOD-PLAINS OF NAZUMI CITY.
AND NOW OUR NEXT STORY.
SHAKE SHAKE
SIGNS OF STRANGULATION WITH A ROPE WERE FOUND ON HIS NECK, AND THE POLICE...
ACCORDING TO INVESTIGATORS, THE CHILD WAS IDENTIFIED AS FIVE-YEAR-OLD MASAHIRO, THE ELDEST SON OF OFFICE WORKER AND AREA RESIDENT KOICHIRO TANEDA.
IT'S HER!
THAT WOMAN'S THE MURDERER!
ARE YOU COLD?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, RYUSUKE? SHAKING LIKE THAT...

THEY GOT HER ADDRESS FROM THE FATHER OF THE SLAIN CHILD AND SEARCHED HER APARTMENT ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT IT WAS ALREADY EMPTY.
SHE ALSO STOPPED APPEARING IN MY ROOM.
HEARING THIS, MY DAD CALLED THE POLICE, AND THE WOMAN WAS LISTED AS A SUSPECT.
YOU CAN'T GO LETTING PEOPLE LIKE THAT INTO YOUR HOUSE.
YOU'RE TOO NICE. I MEAN, TALKING TO HER ABOUT EACH AND EVERY LITTLE THING...
GOT IT?
I HAD NO IDEA SHE WAS CLINGING TO YOU LIKE THAT, RYUSUKE.
PUSH
WHY?
YOU WERE SO NICE TO HER, BUT YOU'RE SO COLD TO ME.
...
DO YOU HATE ME THAT MUCH?
SO THERE REALLY WAS SOMETHING OFF ABOUT HER.

A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE SEEKER.
I GUESS YOU'LL GIVE HER ADVICE?
YEAH.
...
HEY, OVER THERE! CROSSROADS FORTUNE ARE DANGEROUS. WHAT WILL YOU DO IF YOU RUN INTO THE BEAUTIFUL BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS?

AH!
WHAT'S WRONG, RYU—

YOU'RE ...
AH.

AND MIDORI.
OH MY! IF IT ISN'T RYUSUKE.

I GOT A FULL-BODY TATTOO!
HEY? WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I'M IN TROU-BLE.

BEFORE I KNEW IT, I LOOKED LIKE THIS.
I THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD...
I ASKED FOR A LITTLE TATTOO ON MY ARM, AND THEY MADE ME KEEP COMING IN FOR A MONTH.
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
AAAH! I DON'T KNOW!
AAAH! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I CAN'T LET HIM SEE ME LIKE THIS!

RIGHT?! WHY WOULDN'T YOU STOP GOING TO THE TATTOO PLACE BEFORE YOU ENDED UP LIKE THIS?!
YOU CREATE ALL THESE PROBLEMS YOURSELF!
YOU HAD TO HAVE NOTICED AT SOME POINT!
YOU ...
HANG ON A SECOND.
...YOU'RE DELIBERATELY DOING THINGS TO MAKE YOUR LIFE WORSE!
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK...
IT'S TRUE! YOU'RE RIGHT!
AAAAH!
...I'VE BEEN A TOTAL MESS.
I DID. EVER SINCE...
WHAT?! YOU MET THE BOY?!
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THAT HANDSOME BOY!

HE TOLD ME THAT MY PROBLEM WASN'T WORTH HIS TIME, AND THAT I NEEDED A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM, SO I SHOULD GO FIND IT.
AND A BOY ALL IN BLACK CAME ALONG. AAH, HE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL.
IT WAS THREE MONTHS AGO.
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE AFFAIR, SO I DID A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE.
IT STEADILY ESCALATED... BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
I MEAN, HE TOLD ME TO GET A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM.
AND SO I HAD A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM.
SO I GOT PREGNANT WITH MY LOVER'S CHILD.
I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS WITHOUT GIVING MYSELF AN EVEN *BIGGER* PROBLEM.
AAH... BUT I HAD A TERRIBLE REALIZA-TION.
AT FIRST, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT. BUT EVENTUALLY, I INTERPRETED IT TO MEAN THAT IF I WANTED TO GET PAST MY CURRENT PROBLEM, I SHOULD FIND SOMETHING MORE SERIOUS TO WORRY ABOUT.
IF I HAD A MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM, THEN MY CURRENT ISSUE WOULD BE TRIVIAL.

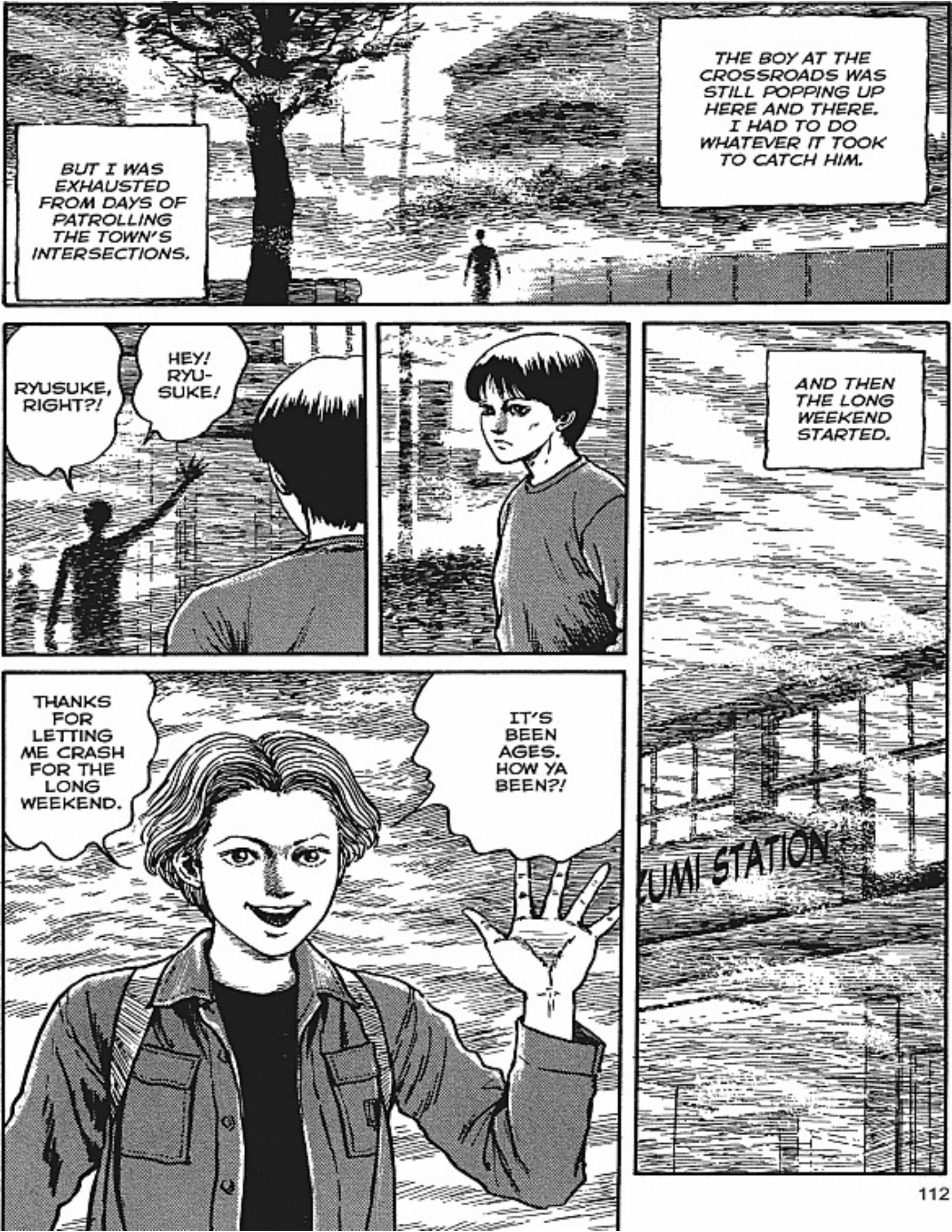
HEE HEE HEE!
OKAY THEN. GOODBYE.
THAT'S IT! HA HA HA... I JUST HAVE TO GET MYSELF INTO MORE TROUBLE THAN THIS.
TH-THAT'S IT.
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT.
LEAD
HEE HEE HEE...
HEE HEE HEE!
THE WOMAN DISAPPEARED INTO THE FOG.
BUT I DOUBTED IF IT WAS ACTUALLY A SUICIDE ATTEMPT.
SHE HAD DOUSED HERSELF IN GASOLINE AND SET HERSELF ON FIRE.
SHE WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO CREATE A NEW PROBLEM FOR HERSELF.
THE NEXT DAY ON THE TV NEWS, I LEARNED THAT THIS WANTED WOMAN ATTEMPTED TO BURN HERSELF TO DEATH AND WAS BROUGHT TO THE HOSPITAL.
THE LOCATION OF THE SUSPECT'S SUICIDE ATTEMPT

WHO IS HE?
STILL, IT WAS THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS WHO MADE HER LIKE THAT.
SHE HAD SERIOUS BURNS ALL OVER AND WAS IN CRITICAL CONDITION.
KNOCK KNOCK
!
AND THAT WAS THE END OF HER STORY. WE WERE UNLIKELY TO EVER SEE HER AGAIN.
BUT THERE WAS NOTHING OTHER THAN THE DARKNESS OF THE WARM NIGHT SPREADING OUT BELOW.
I TIMIDLY OPENED THE WINDOW.
WAS I HEARING THINGS?

LOVESICKNESS
SHADOW
影
かげ

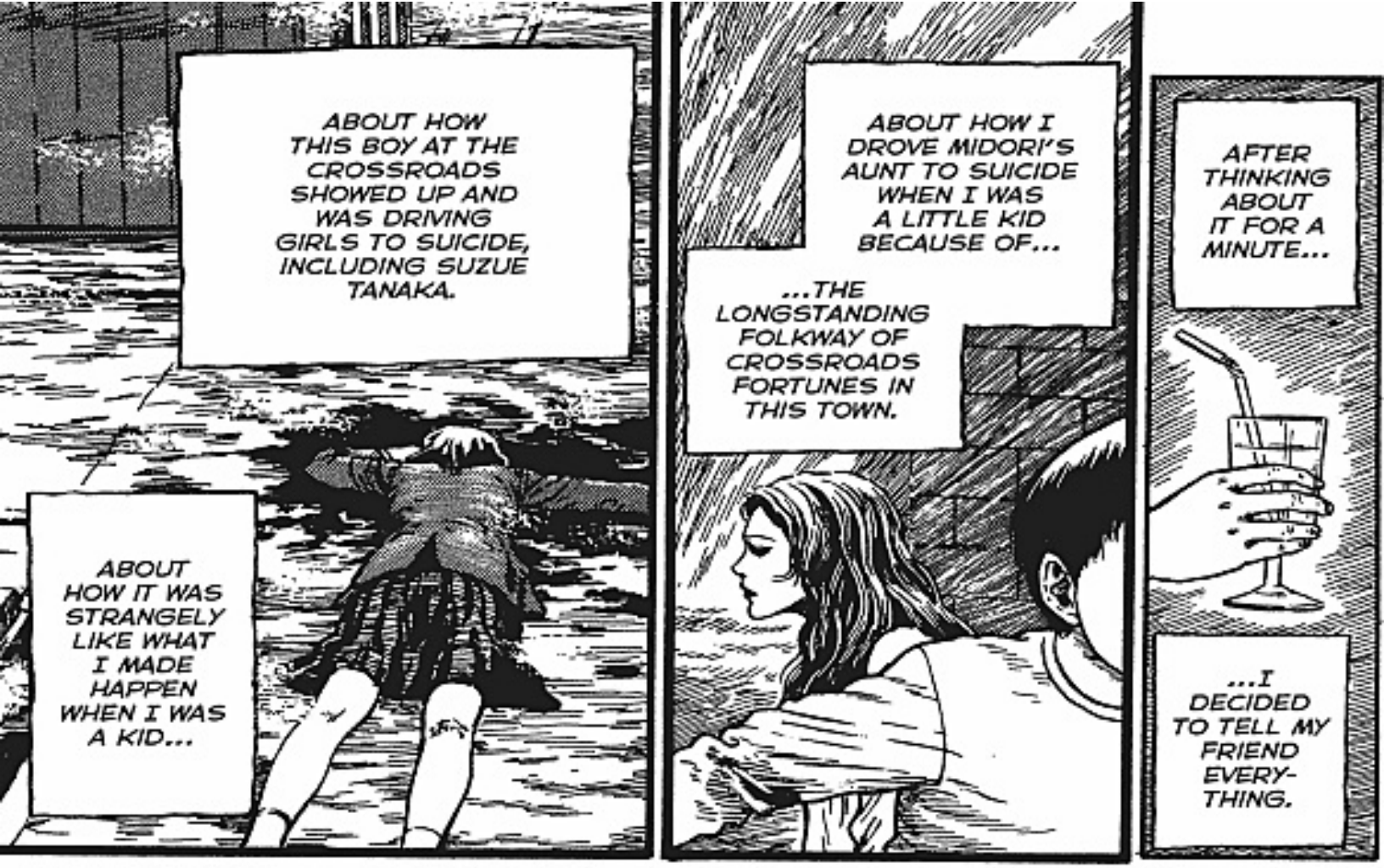
WHAM
BECAUSE I SEEMED SO LIFELESS, LIKE A DEAD PERSON.
AT SCHOOL, I'D BEEN GIVEN THE NICKNAME "DEAD MAN."
ZOOM
DEAD PEOPLE SHOULD STAY IN THEIR GRAVES!
DON'T STAGGER AROUND LIKE THAT!

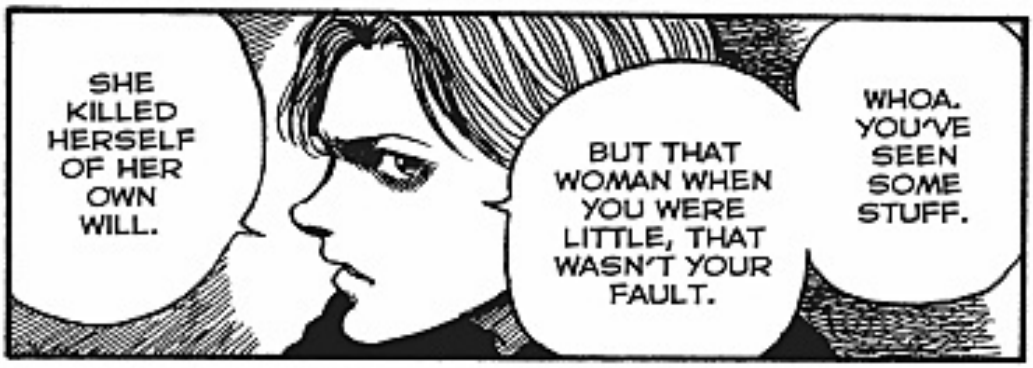
MIDORI WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO CARED ABOUT ME.
IT WAS MOSTLY PEOPLE WHO HATED ME BECAUSE OF SUZUE TANAKA'S SUICIDE.
AND I WAS STILL BEING HARASSED ON TOP OF THAT.
YOU SUCK. BRING BACK SUZUE TANAKA. GO TO HELL!
BUT I HAD TO AVOID HER.
MY FEELINGS FOR HER GREW STRONGER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I FELT LIKE I WAS LOSING MY MIND.
IT WAS HARD TO BREATHE.

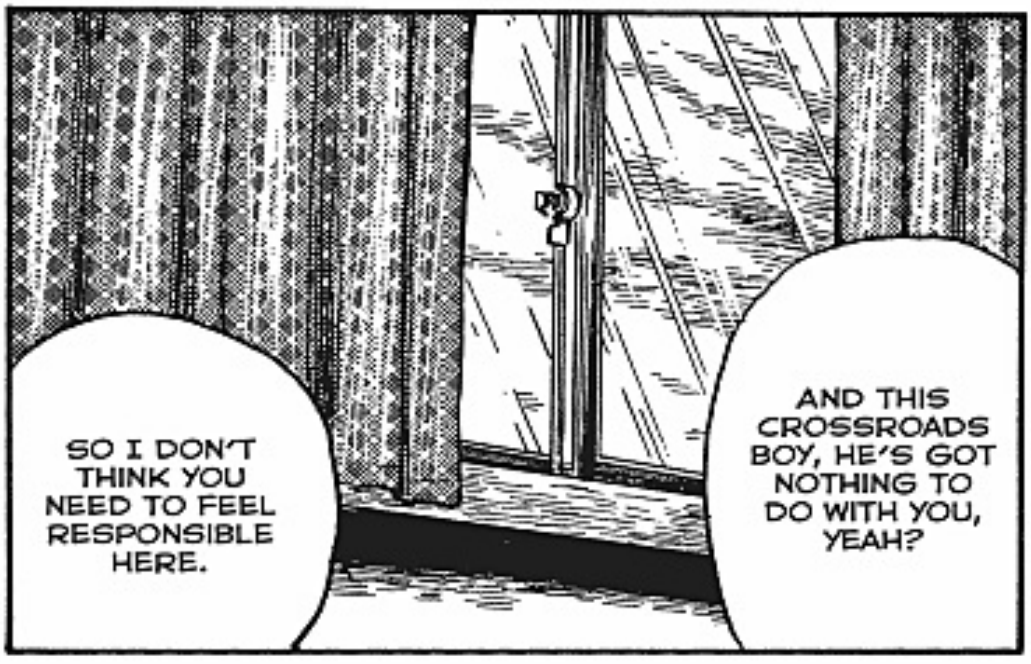

BUT I WAS EXHAUSTED FROM DAYS OF PATROLLING THE TOWN'S INTERSECTIONS.
THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS WAS STILL POPPING UP HERE AND THERE. I HAD TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO CATCH HIM.
RYUSUKE, RIGHT?!
HEY! RYU-SUKE!
AND THEN THE LONG WEEKEND STARTED.
ZUMI STATION
THANKS FOR LETTING ME CRASH FOR THE LONG WEEKEND.
IT'S BEEN AGES. HOW YA BEEN?!

HUH?!
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, TEJIMA!
SURE.
NO... I'M FINE.
YOU SICK OR SOME-THING?
RYUSUKE... WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE SERIOUSLY SKINNY.
MY BEST FRIEND FROM THE PLACE I USED TO LIVE.
HIS NAME WAS KOTARO TEJIMA.
HE WAS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE HOLIDAY TO COME HANG OUT.

YOU'RE NOT FITTING IN HERE?
COME ON, RYUSUKE! GETTING ALL SERIOUS.
YOU LIVED HERE BEFORE, THOUGH?
THINGS WERE WAY BETTER WHERE I USED TO LIVE.
I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN I SAW YOUR FACE, TEJIMA.
HUH?
WHAT'S GOING ON? SOMETHING BUGGING YOU?
YEAH, WELL.
MM ...
YOU'RE RIGHT...
YEAH ...
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER IF YOU TALK ABOUT IT.
AND WE'VE ALWAYS TALKED TO EACH OTHER, RIGHT?
LOOK, YOU CAN TELL ME IF SOME-THING'S UP.


ABOUT HOW THIS BOY AT THE CROSSROADS SHOWED UP AND WAS DRIVING GIRLS TO SUICIDE, INCLUDING SUZUE TANAKA.
ABOUT HOW IT WAS STRANGELY LIKE WHAT I MADE HAPPEN WHEN I WAS A KID...
ABOUT HOW I DROVE MIDORI'S AUNT TO SUICIDE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID BECAUSE OF...
...THE LONGSTANDING FOLKWAY OF CROSSROADS FORTUNES IN THIS TOWN.
AFTER THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A MINUTE...
...I DECIDED TO TELL MY FRIEND EVERY-THING.


SHE KILLED HERSELF OF HER OWN WILL.
BUT THAT WOMAN WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE, THAT WASN'T YOUR FAULT.
WHOA. YOU'VE SEEN SOME STUFF.


SO I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO FEEL RESPONSIBLE HERE.
AND THIS CROSSROADS BOY, HE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, YEAH?

...

I HEARD THE RUMORS, BUT THIS TOWN REALLY IS FOGGY, *HUH*?
WHAT?
TEJIMA... NO. HE'S TOO DANGEROUS.
SUCH A CREEP. I'LL HELP YOU OUT THIS WEEKEND.
YOU KNOW WHAT? I WANNA CATCH THIS CROSSROADS GUY NOW, TOO, RYUSUKE.
AND I WANT TO SEE THIS FORTUNE-TELLING. I'LL GO TELL PEOPLE HOPEFUL THINGS TOO, LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOING.
DON'T WORRY! YOU THINK HIS MAGIC'S GONNA WORK ON ME?

AND DON'T TAKE ON THE FORTUNES!
WHY NOT?
TEJIMA, LET'S NOT.
LET'S SPLIT UP.
...
JUST STRANGE.
STRANGE ?
LIKE HOW ?
BECAUSE SOME-TIMES, STRANGE PEOPLE ARE STAND-ING AT THE CROSS-ROADS.
WHY NOT ...?
TELL YOUR MOM I'LL BE BACK BY SUPPER!
TEJIMA!
SEE YA!
WELL, WHATEVS. I'M GONNA GET OUT THERE.

I MEAN, THERE AREN'T A LOT OF PEOPLE ON THE STREET.
BUT IS THERE ANYONE ACTUALLY OUT HERE FOR FORTUNE-TELLING?
HM?
HAAH
HAAH
BECAUSE OF THE FOG, I GUESS. OR BECAUSE OF ALL THE DARK THINGS HAPPENING?
IT'S LIKE THE WHOLE TOWN'S DARK.

HAAAAH
HAAAAH
HAAAAH
WHAT THE? SUCH LOUD HUFFING ...
OH HO! IS THAT A PERSON WAITING FOR A CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE ?
THEY MUST HAVE SOME SERIOUS PROB-LEMS.
HAAAAH

エゴエゴ

HAAAH
HAAAH

SHE SHOUTED YOUR NAME IN PAIN AND SAID SHE LOVED YOU SO MUCH SHE COULD DIE.
I RAN INTO THIS GIRL COVERED IN BLOOD.
RYU-SUKE... WHAT THE HELL WAS *THAT*?!
WHAT'S WRONG, TEJIMA?
TEJIMA CAME HOME THAT EVENING, LOOKING INCREDIBLY PALE.
I HADN'T SEEN IT IN A WHILE, THOUGH.
S-SUZUE... SUZUE'S GHOST...
WHAT *WAS* THAT?
W-WHAT?!
GHOSTS APPEAR AT THE CROSS-ROADS IN THIS TOWN.
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU GO OFF BY YOURSELF.
I SHOULD HAVE FLAT-OUT TOLD YOU THAT.
YOU OKAY, TEJIMA?
BRRR... I JUST GOT THIS CHILL.

ACTUALLY, MAYBE FORGET IT.
AH...
HUH? WHAT?
ANYWAY, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANNA ASK YOU.
IT'S OKAY.
SHE SAID...
THE TRUTH IS, OKAY? SOMETHING SHE SAID'S BOTHERING ME.
AH... YEAH.
WHAT? NOW I WANT TO KNOW. TELL ME.
RYUSUKE WITH HIS BLACK CLOTHES AND HIS PIERCED EARS, SO BEAUTIFUL LIKE THE DEAD. HE'S SO COOOOOOOL!
AAAAAAH! I LOVE RYUSUKE SO MUCH I COULD DIIIIEEEEE!
WILL WE FALL IN LOOOOOOVE ?!

WHAT ?!
W—
WHY WOULD SHE SAY THAT ABOUT YOU?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOUR CROSSROADS BOY LOOKS LIKE, RIGHT?
A COOL BOY IN BLACK CLOTHES WITH PIERCED EARS...
AND YOU SAID WHAT HE'S DOING IS LIKE WHAT YOU DID WAY BACK WHEN, RIGHT?
YOU SAID THIS GUY STARTED SHOWING UP AFTER YOU MOVED HERE, YEAH?
AND EVEN THE LOCATION OF THE SUICIDES IS ALMOST THE SAME... IS IT ALL REALLY JUST A COINCIDENCE?
I DON'T KNOW! I'D LIKE TO ASK THE SAME QUESTION !
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
HEY, RYU-SUKE ?

BUT I'M WORKING HARD TO MAKE UP FOR IT NOW.
I WOULDN'T DO THE SAME THING AGAIN, EVEN BY ACCIDENT! YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME!
TEJIMA... HANG ON A SEC. WHAT I DID WHEN I WAS LITTLE WAS CRIMINAL.
W-WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?!
YOU... YOU ACTU-ALLY...
...SUSPECT ME?! YOU THINK I'M THAT BOY?!
WHAT?
LIKE MAYBE YOU'RE DOING THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THAT, UNCONSCIOUSLY.
YEAH... THEN IT'S ALL GOOD. BUT I JUST HAVE THIS FEAR.
RATHER THAN PAY FOR YOUR CRIME...
...IT'S FASTER FOR YOU TO ESCAPE YOUR GUILTY CONSCIENCE BY COMMITTING MORE CRIMES AND GETTING USED TO IT.
BASICALLY, YOU'RE DOING THE SAME THING YOU DID BACK THEN WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT.

THERE'S THE DOPPELGANGER PHENOMENON, WHERE YOUR OWN SELF APPEARS BEFORE YOU.
OR MAYBE IT WAS A BROCKEN SPECTER, AND YOUR OWN SHADOW WAS PROJECTED ONTO THE FOG.
FOR ONE THING, I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES.
NO WAY. WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?
IT'S MORE THAN POSSIBLE THAT YOU SAW YOUR OWN SELF.
YOU DON'T HAVE PIERCED EARS!
RIGHT.
PIERCED...?
HE DIDN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE ME.
NO...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME.
SORRY FOR DOUBT-ING YOU.
AND I DON'T HAVE PIERCED EARS.

BING BONG
BUT THE THING I TOTALLY CAN'T UNDER-STAND...
...IS WHY SUZUE WOULD SAY THAT TO TEJIMA.
BING BONG
AND SO THE LONG WEEKEND ENDED, WITH EVERYTHING STILL UNRESOLVED.
TWO DAYS LATER, TEJIMA LEFT THE HOUSE LIKE IT WAS ON FIRE.
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
EVERYONE'S ACTING WEIRD.
REALLY?! THAT'S HIM?! WHOA.
OH... LOOK! IT'S HIM.

THAT'S THE RUMOR.
WHAT ?!
I GUESS HE'S THE CROSS-ROADS BOY.
SO IT'S TRUE. THERE ARE GHOSTS AROUND HERE.
I HEARD SUZUE TANAKA'S GHOST HAS BEEN SHOWING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE LATELY.
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER WHISPER
SO THEN IT REALLY IS HIM?!
GET THIS. SHE SAYS HE'S A BEAUTIFUL BOY IN BLACK WITH PIERCED EARS...
SHE'S ASKING FOR CROSSROADS FORTUNES, COVERED IN BLOOD. AND SHE ALWAYS ASKS ABOUT HER FUTURE WITH RYUSUKE FUKADA.

WHY WOULD SUZUE...
WHISPER WHISPER
WHY ...?
WHISPER WHISPER
2B
BING BONG
BING BONG
WHISPER
WHISPER
THIS IS JUST MY OPINION, BUT I'M SURE IT'S TO HARASS YOU.
IT'S JUST AWFUL. SAYING YOU'RE THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS, I MEAN...
A TOTALLY FALSE RUMOR SPREAD BY PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE YOU.
HONESTLY! WHAT IS EVEN GOING ON?!

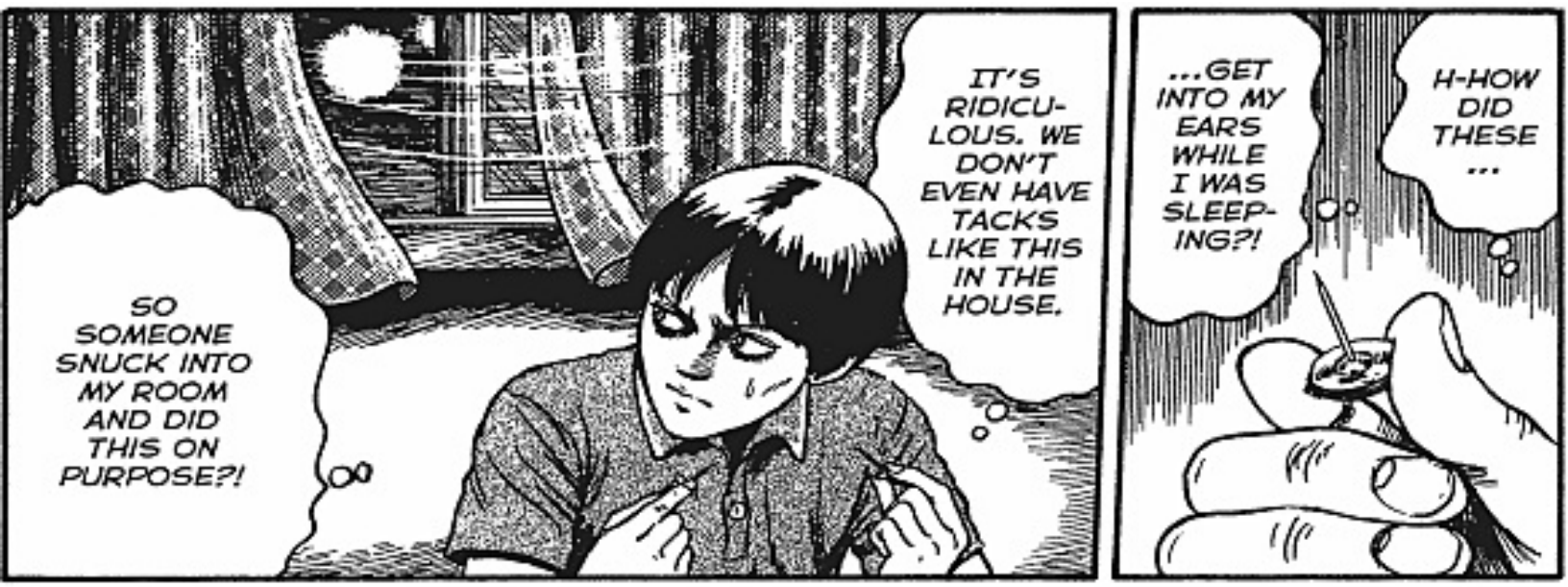
JUST IGNORE THEM.
THOSE GUYS HAD CRUSHES ON SUZUE. THEY'RE THE ONES HARASSING YOU.
I FIGURED YOU WERE A BAD GUY. I MEAN, YOU BLEW OFF SUZUE. YOU'RE THE REASON SHE KILLED HERSELF.
I HAD NO IDEA THAT YOU WERE HIM.
AND THAT'S NOT ALL. YOU PUSHED SO MANY GIRLS TO SUICIDE! YOU'RE A VILE MONSTER!
HEY, WAIT UP, CROSS-ROADS BOY!

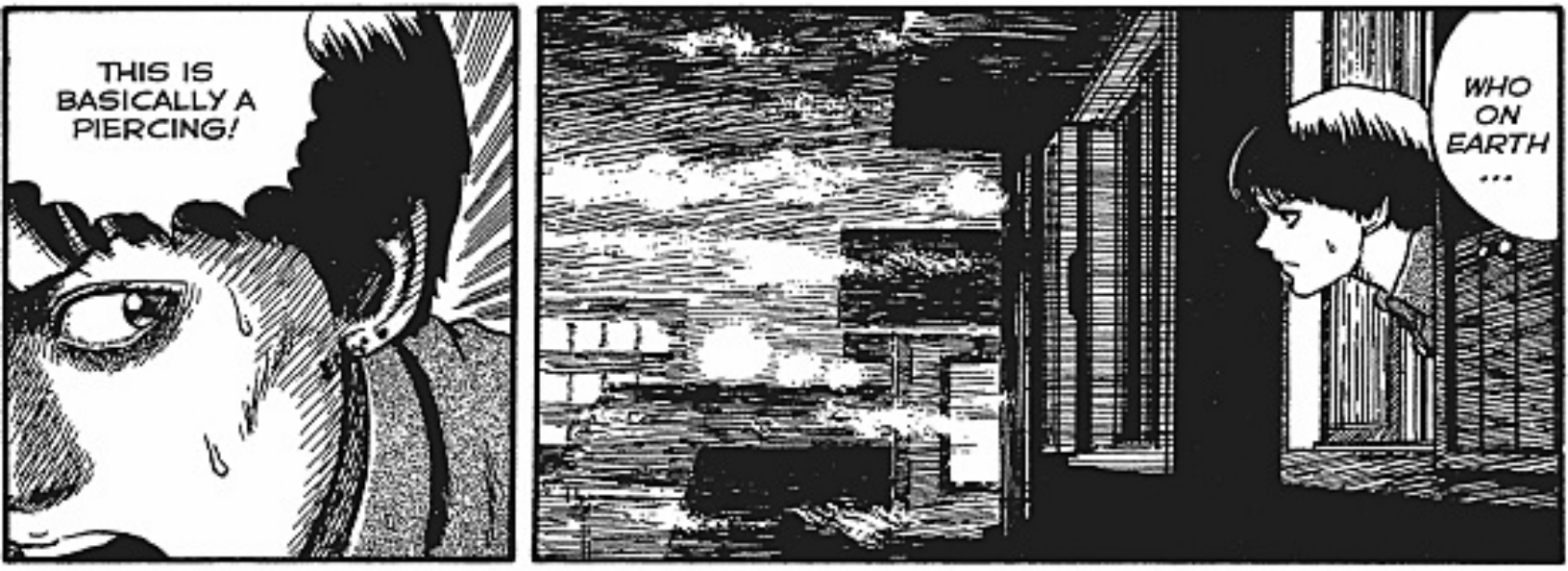
FIRST OF ALL, RYUSUKE DOESN'T HAVE PIERCED EARS!
I'VE SEEN HIM. IT'S A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSON.
HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY EARRINGS!
RYU-SUKE'S NOT THE CROSS-ROADS BOY!
QUIT WITH THE LIES!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA JUST WALK AWAY FROM THIS.
ANYWAY, RYUSUKE FUKADA.
...
WHAT ?
AND DO YOU HAVE ANY PROOF THAT THE GUY YOU SAW WAS ACTUALLY THE REAL DEAL?
HMPH. PIERC-INGS AREN'T THE ONLY KIND OF EAR-RINGS.
...
I WISH THEY WOULDN'T LUMP YOU IN WITH HIM, A GUY WHO DRIVES STRANGERS TO SUICIDE!
THEY REALLY ARE AWFUL.

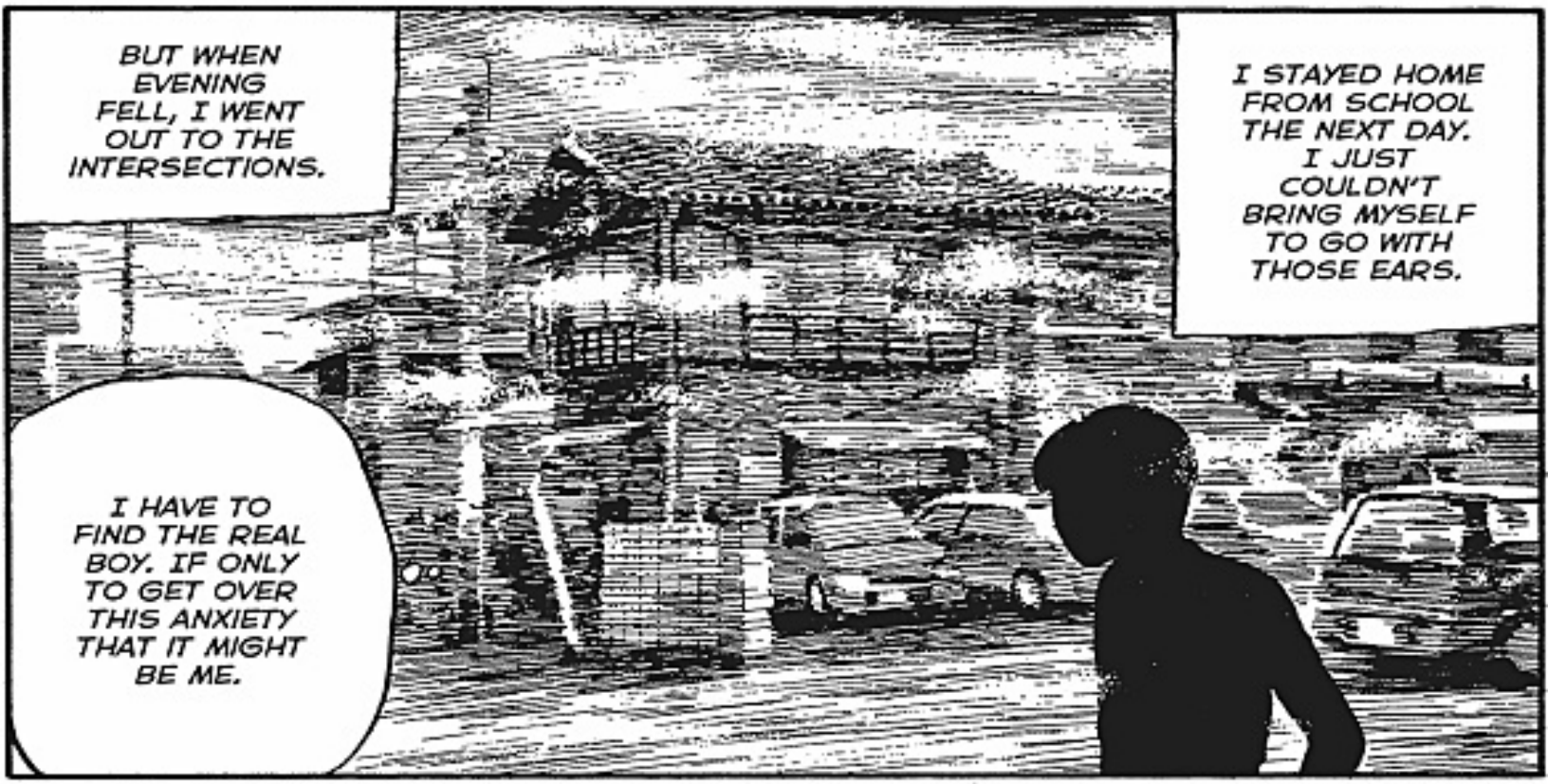
AND IF SUZUE IS SAYING I'M THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS...
THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN HIM FOR SURE ARE THE SUICIDES. ONLY SUZUE AND THE OTHERS!
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S TRUE THAT THERE'S NO PROOF THE BOY MIDORI AND I SAW WAS ACTUALLY THE CROSSROADS BOY.
MAYBE IT'S LIKE TEJIMA SAID AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW IT MYSELF?
AS SOON AS I CAN!
BUT... I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT! I HAVE TO FIND HIM AND MAKE SURE!
AH!
...

GRIN
IT'S HIM!
STOP!
CHK
SHWF
SNAP

DOD
KACHAK
BUT THIS PAIN IN MY EARS.
WHAT THE...
HAAH! HAAH!
A DREAM ...?
OW !!
AH!
IT'S ...
... THUMB-TACKS!
OWWWW!
SOME-THING'S STAB-BING INTO MY EARS!


SO SOMEONE SNUCK INTO MY ROOM AND DID THIS ON PURPOSE?!
IT'S RIDICU-LOUS. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TACKS LIKE THIS IN THE HOUSE.
...GET INTO MY EARS WHILE I WAS SLEEP-ING?!
H-HOW DID THESE ...

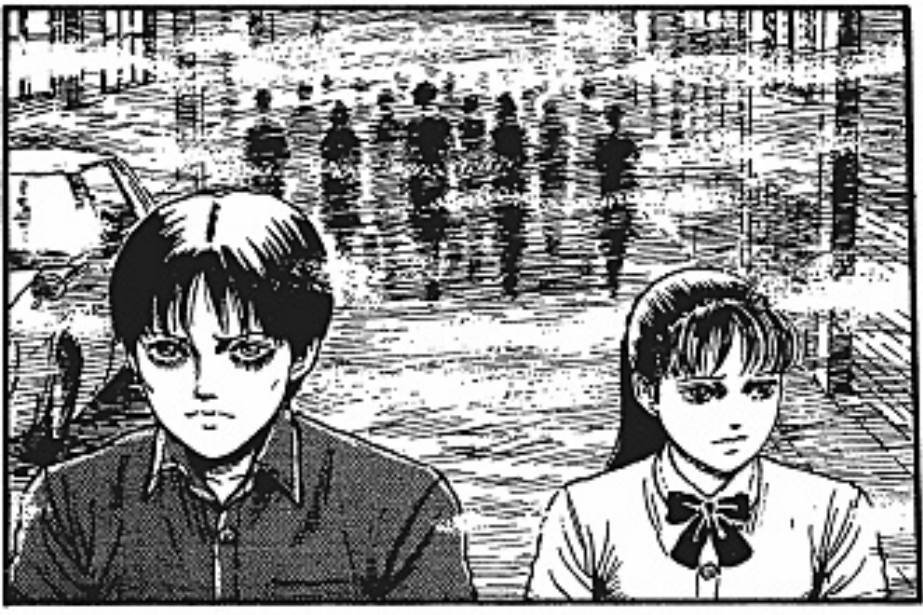

THIS IS BASICALLY A PIERCING!
WHO ON EARTH ...

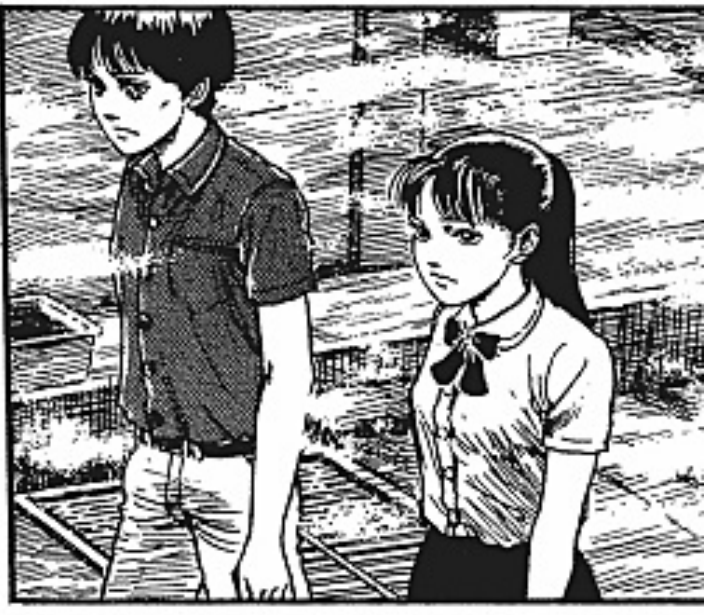

BUT WHEN EVENING FELL, I WENT OUT TO THE INTERSECTIONS.
I STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL THE NEXT DAY. I JUST COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO GO WITH THOSE EARS.
I HAVE TO FIND THE REAL BOY. IF ONLY TO GET OVER THIS ANXIETY THAT IT MIGHT BE ME.

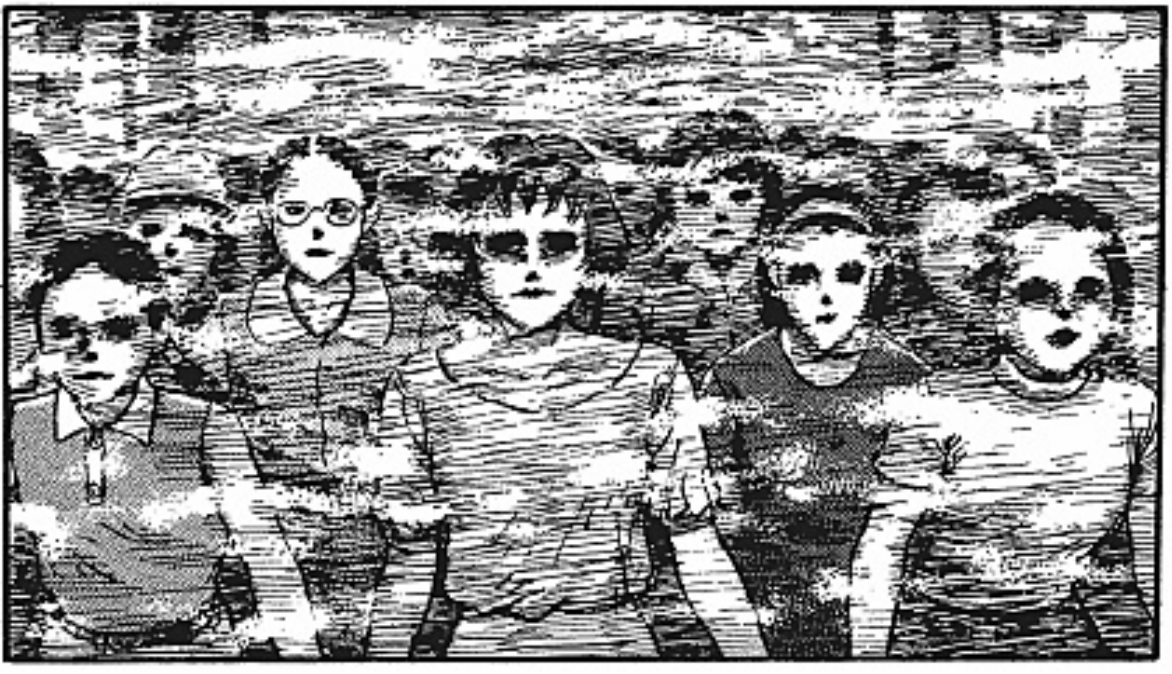
RYUSUKE!
...
YOU REALLY LIKE TO MEDDLE, HUH?
I FIGURED YOU WOULDN'T, SO I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU.
YOU SKIP SCHOOL, BUT YOU DON'T SKIP YOUR ROUNDS, HUH?
THOSE RECKLESS GIRLS GO AROUND THE CROSS-ROADS EVERY DAY LOOKING FOR HIM.
YOU KNOW THE ONES. THOSE PAS-SIONATE FANS OF THE BOY WHO'VE POPPED UP LATELY?
SOME OF THE GIRLS GOT ALL WORKED UP ABOUT HOW THE CROSS-ROADS BOY WAS ABSENT.
RYUSUKE, SCHOOL WAS TERRIBLE TODAY.

THEY'VE TOTALLY GOT THE WRONG IDEA.
DID YOU WANT TO READ THEM?
FROM
To the beautiful boy at the crossroads
LOVE LETTERS TO THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS.
YOUR SHOE CUBBY WAS FULL OF THESE, RYU-SUKE.
AND ...
...
RIP
RIP
NO, NO REASON YOU WOULD.
...
OKAY. I'LL JUST DESTROY THEM THEN.
RIP
...
I MEAN, WRITING YOU LOVE LETTERS!
RIP
THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS!

AAH! I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER! OKAY, RYUSUKE! LET'S DO THE ROUNDS!
WE GOTTA CATCH THE REAL GUY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!







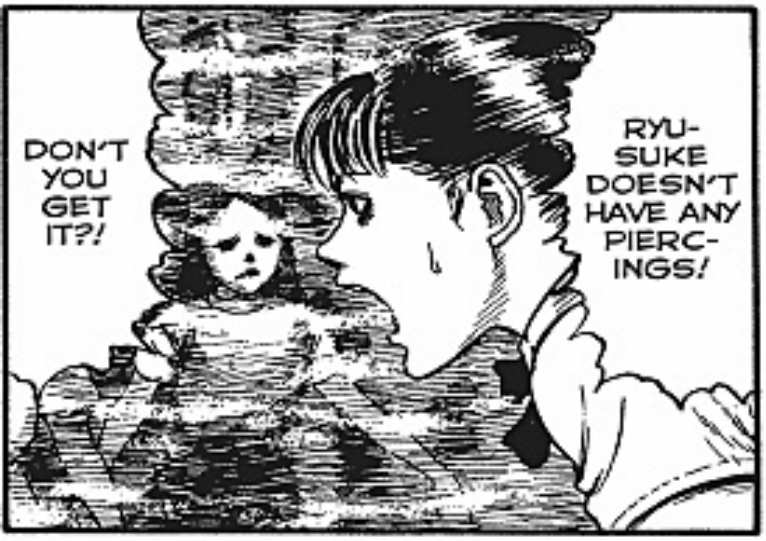
...?

THEM? THEY'RE CROSS-ROADS BOY CHASERS ...

WHO ARE THEY?

WHAT ...?

THEY FOUND YOU AND NOW THEY'RE FOLLOWING YOU.
THEY THINK YOU'RE HIM.


DON'T YOU GET IT?!
RYU-SUKE DOESN'T HAVE ANY PIERC-INGS!

I'M TELL-ING YOU THIS GUY IS NOT THE CROSS-ROADS BOY!
HEY! QUIT THIS ALREADY!

WHAT ?!
...
TAKE A LOOK AT HIS EARLOBES.
DON'T YOU HAVE EYES?
YEAH, LOOK!
WHEN DID YOU GET THOSE?
R— RYUSUKE! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR EARS?!
EEEEEE
...WE FOUND YOU.
AT LAST ...
HE IS THE BEAUTIFUL BOY AT THE CROSSROADS.
SEE? LOOK AT HIM.
I KNEW IT WAS HIM.
YES.

EEEEEE
EE
WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THEM?!
EE
CRAZY!
I STARTED RUNNING.

EEEEEE!
EEEE!
HUFF
HUFF
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
HON-
ESTLY.
PHEW.
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
HEY,
FUKADA
!
...

SHK
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.
WE MEET AGAIN, CROSSROADS GUY!
AND THEN YOU COME TRANSFERRING IN AND STEAL HER HEART OUT FROM UNDER US.
WE'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH SUZUE TANAKA SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, YOU KNOW.
W-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO...?
YEAH! SO WE'VE DECIDED TO KILL YOU!
YOU KILLED HER. HOW COULD *YOU* UNDERSTAND HOW WE FEEL?!
STOP!

I FLED LIKE A MAN POSSESSED.
SUZUE...
WE WILL AVENGE YOU!
SUZUE!
...I'D RUN RIGHT INTO THE POLICE STATION.
BEFORE I KNEW IT...
WHY'D YOU COME RACING IN HERE LIKE THAT?
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
HAAH!
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH EVERYONE.
SOMETHING'S WRONG...
HAAH!

...WELL, WE'VE GOTTEN SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOU.
THIS MIGHT BE AN AWKWARD QUESTION, BUT...
BIT OFF TOPIC HERE, BUT YOU'RE RYUSUKE FUKADA, RIGHT?
...
YES.
I'M NOT HIM.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
THERE'S TALK THAT IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE YOU.
YOU KNOW, THAT BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS CAUSING SUCH A FUSS RIGHT NOW?
... THOSE ARE PIERC-INGS?
INCIDEN-TALLY... YOUR EARS...
WITH THESE SUICIDES, THE POLICE CAN'T EXACTLY SIT AND DO NOTHING, YOU SEE.
WELL, IT'S JUST WE REALLY GOT OUR HANDS FULL WITH THAT ONE.

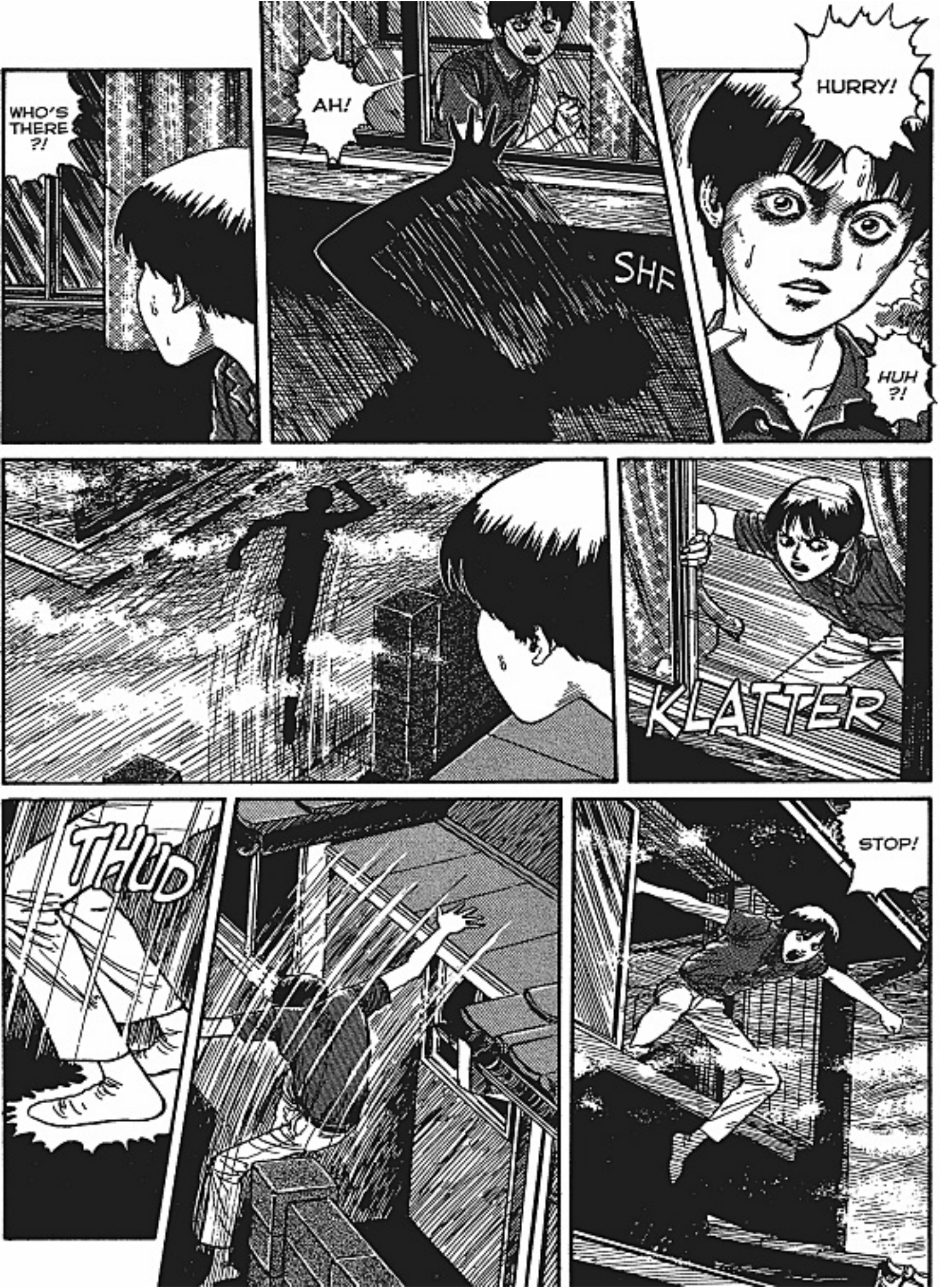
IS THAT ACTUALLY POSSIBLE?
SO YOU JUST HAPPENED TO GET STABBED IN BOTH EARLOBES? WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING.
STABBED YOU WITH TACKS?
IT'S THE TRUTH.
NO, THEY'RE NOT.
SOME-ONE STABBED MY EARS WITH THUMB-TACKS WHILE I WAS ASLEEP.
WE WON'T GET ANY-WHERE WITH LIES!
WHY WOULD YOU LIE LIKE THAT?!
THOSE ARE PIERCINGS, YES?!
YOU NEED TO START BEING STRAIGHT WITH ME!
I'M NOT *HIM!*
YOU'RE WRONG! YOU'RE WRONG!

NOW LET'S HURRY HOME AND GET YOU SOME REST.
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THEY THINK YOU DID THIS, RYUSUKE. I KNOW YOU DIDN'T.
BUT APPARENTLY, THAT DIDN'T MEAN THEY STOPPED SUSPECTING ME.
I WAS ALLOWED TO GO HOME THAT EVENING.
OH! IT IS!
LOOK! IT'S THE CROSS-ROADS BOY!
THD THD THD THD
EEEEEEE

THDD THDD THDD THDD THDD
AAAAH!
EEEE-EEE!
NO!
NO ...
I FEEL LIKE I'M LOSING MY MIND.
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!
YANK

BLACK CLOTHES ...
...
...
FWMP
HAVE I BEEN WEARING THEM AROUND THE INTERSECTIONS...
...WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING IT MYSELF?
THESE... ARE THEY MY CLOTHES?

HOW DID THIS GET HERE?
KNIFE
?!
DO IT.
HURRY.
GO ON.
MAYBE I'LL JUST GO AHEAD AND CUT MY THROAT...
YES.
HURRY. DO IT.


WHO'S THERE ?!
AH!
SHF
HURRY!
HUH ?!
KLATTER
THUD
STOP!

AH!
THAT BACK ...
!
GASP
TEJIMA!
THD
ROLL

TEJIMA?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING...? I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME!
HUFF HUFF
THAT SUZUE, THE ONE COVERED IN BLOOD...
THAT GIRL... SHE POSSESSED ME.
I DON'T THINK I CAN LEAVE UNTIL SHE'S SATISFIED.
BUT WHEN I TRIED TO LEAVE, I COULDN'T.
I WAS GOING TO, OKAY? I WANTED TO GET OUT OF THIS TOWN ASAP.
...SO IF YOU DON'T DIE, I'M IN REAL TROUBLE.
I ANSWERED HER, TOLD HER SHE'D FIND LOVE...
IF YOU DON'T GO TO THE AFTER-LIFE...
...
...IN THE AFTER-LIFE!
SHE... SHE *LOVES* YOU. SHE WANTS TO BE WITH YOU...

YEAH ...
I SPREAD THE RUMOR AT SCHOOL, TOO.
SO YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET ME TO SNAP AND KILL MYSELF?
YOU STABBED MY EARS WITH THOSE TACKS?! AND PUT THE BLACK CLOTHES IN MY BED...
HAAAAAH
HAAAH
RYUSUKE! HELP ME! IT'S HER...
SHE'S GOING TO KILL ME...
HAAAAAAH
THAT BREATH-ING...

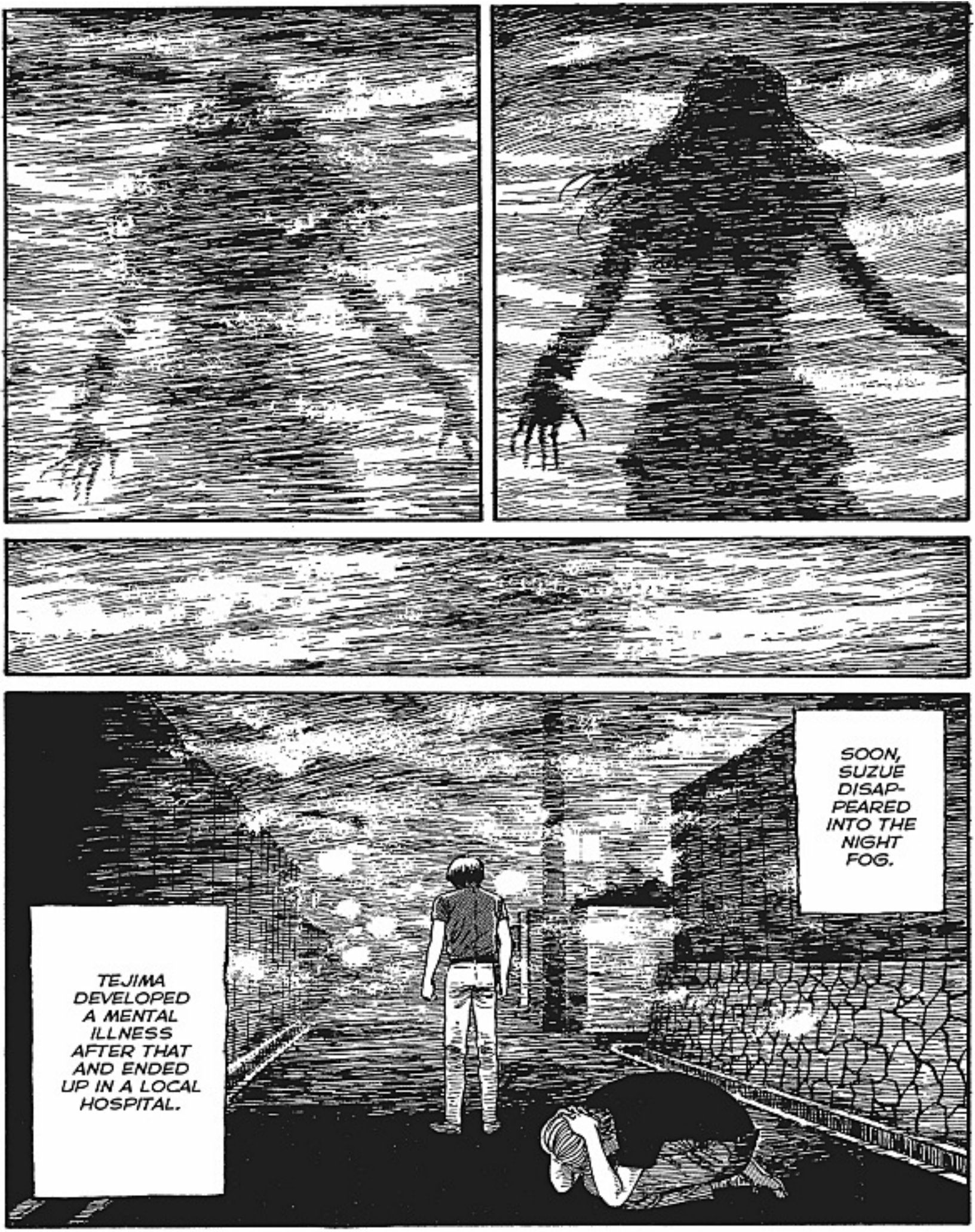
HAAAAH
HAAAAH

AAAAAAH! IT HUUUUURRRRTS! TEJIMAAAAAAA!

HURRYYYYY! BRING ME RYUSU-KEEEEEEEE!

HE'S TALLER AND WEARS ALL BLACK. HE'S DEATHLY BEAUTI- FUUUUUL!
NOOOOO! THAT'S NOT HIIIIIIM!
SEE? HE'S HERE. HE'S RIGHT HERE.
I-I BROUGHT HIM...
I AM RYUSUKE! HAVE YOU FORGOT- TEN ME?!
SUZUE ...
YOU LIED TO MEEEEE!
AAAAAH! WHEN WILL YOU MAKE MY DREAM COME TRUUUUE?!
WHY ?!
YOU'RE CONFUSING ME WITH THE CROSSROADS BOY.
HAAAH
HAAAH
I-I DIDN'T LIE TO YOU! EEEEAH!

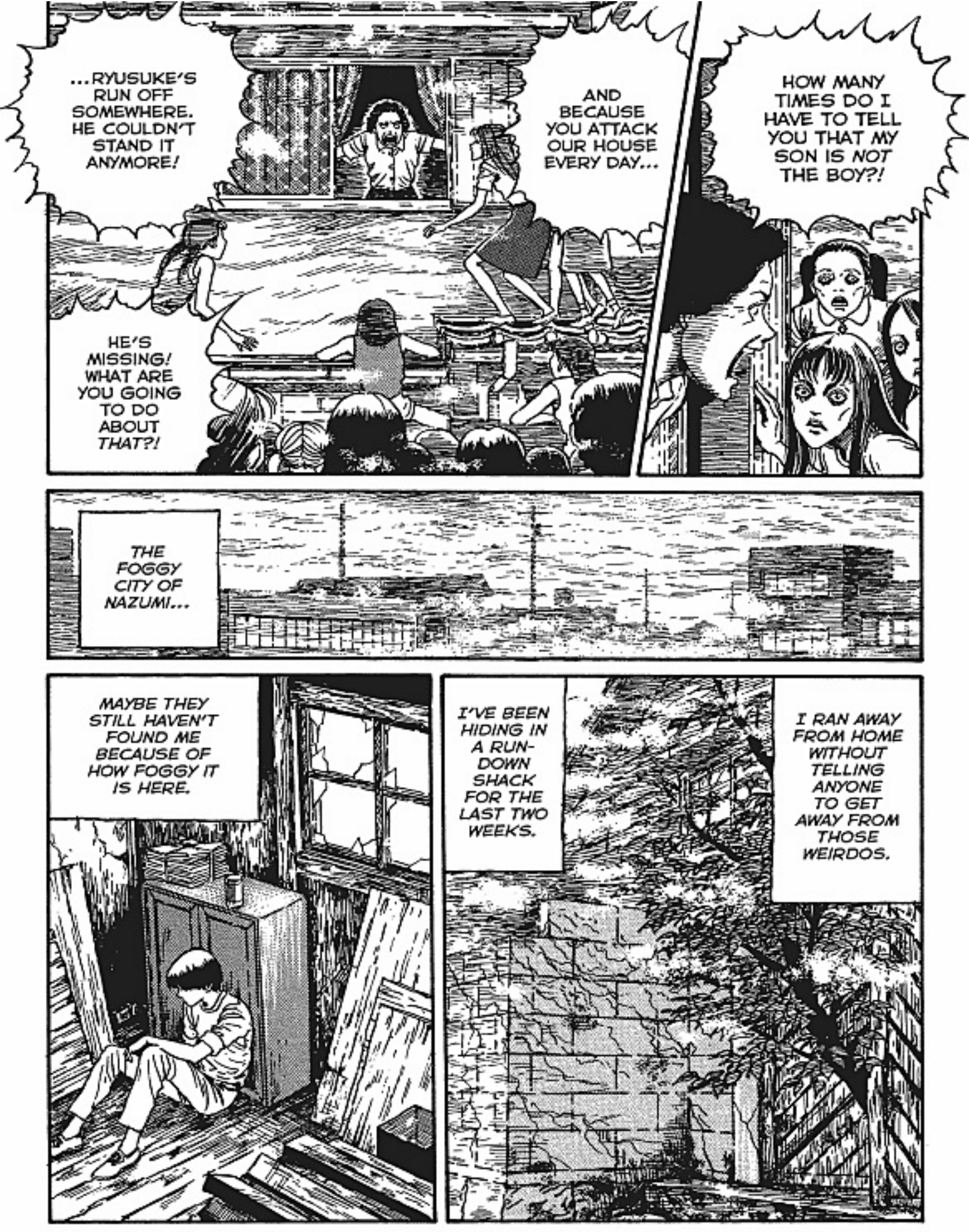
BRING HIM TO ME NOOOOOOW! THAT BEAUTIFUL BOOOOOY!
AAAAAAH! IT HURRRRRRTS! HURRYYYYY!
RIGHT. YOU'D BEEN ACTING STRANGE EVER SINCE YOU MET HIM.
BUT IT WASN'T ME YOU WERE ATTRACTED TO. IT WAS *HIM!*
YOU STARTED SAYING YOU LIKED ME.
PLEASE, SUZUE! REST IN PEACE ALREADY!
TEJIMA AND I CAN'T BRING HIM TO YOU!


SOON, SUZUE DISAP-PEARED INTO THE NIGHT FOG.
TEJIMA DEVELOPED A MENTAL ILLNESS AFTER THAT AND ENDED UP IN A LOCAL HOSPITAL.

SHADOW/END

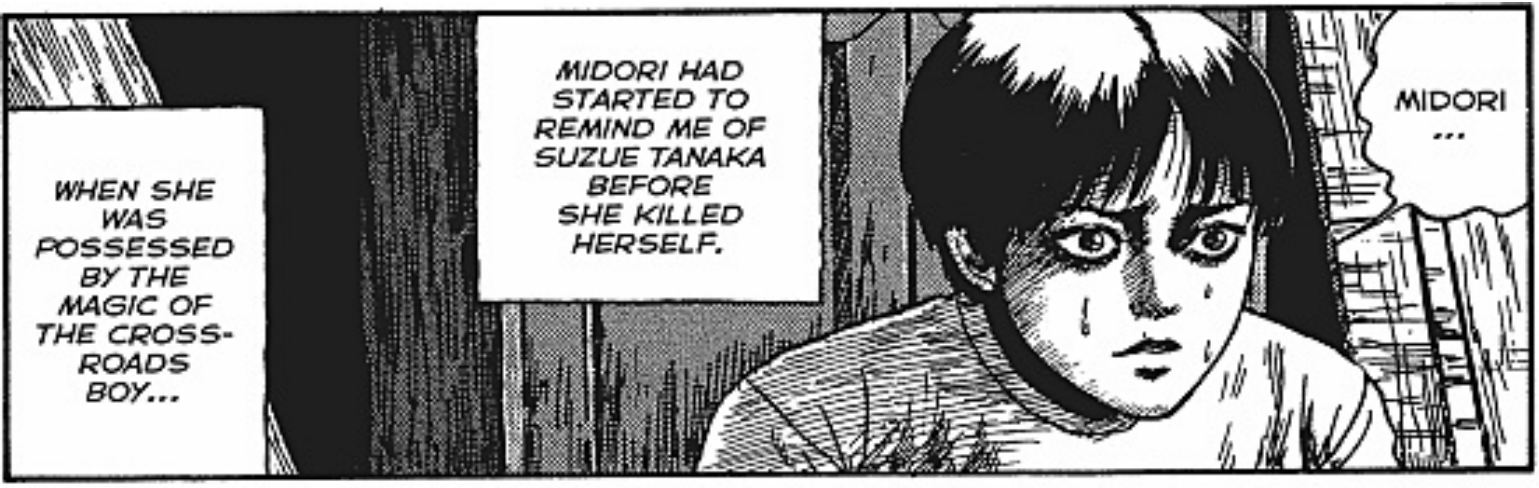
LOVESICKNESS
SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT
絶叫の夜
ぜっきょうのよる

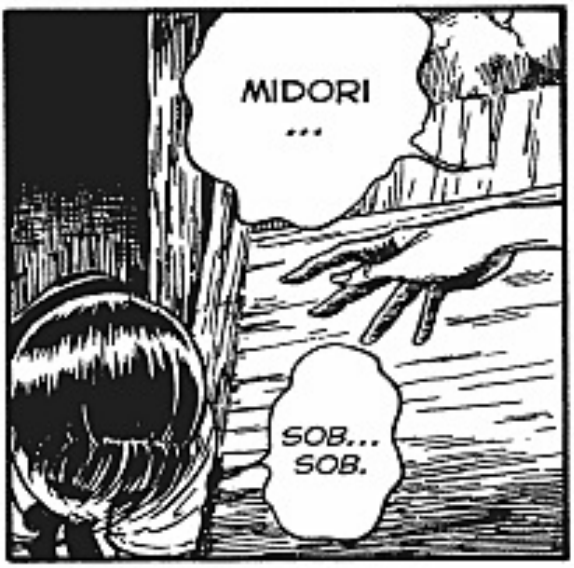
EEEEE!
EEEEE!
MY PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROAAAADS! PLEAAASE! COME OUUUT!
I LOVE YOU!
EEEEE!
THIS IS HIS ROOM!
BAM BAM
OPEN UP!
BAM
EEEEE!
MY PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROADS!
BAM BAM
EEEEE!
WOULD YOU PLEASE *BEHAVE* YOUR-SELVES?!


...RYUSUKE'S RUN OFF SOMEWHERE. HE COULDN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!
HE'S MISSING! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT?!
AND BECAUSE YOU ATTACK OUR HOUSE EVERY DAY...
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT MY SON IS NOT THE BOY?!
THE FOGGY CITY OF NAZUMI...
MAYBE THEY STILL HAVEN'T FOUND ME BECAUSE OF HOW FOGGY IT IS HERE.
I'VE BEEN HIDING IN A RUN-DOWN SHACK FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS.
I RAN AWAY FROM HOME WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE TO GET AWAY FROM THOSE WEIRDOS.

I BROUGHT YOU SOME SUPPER.
BUT MIDORI MANAGED TO PIN DOWN MY LOCATION PRETTY QUICK.
THANKS FOR ALWAYS DOING THIS...
KREEE
RYU-SUKE?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL BEING MISTAKEN FOR THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS.
YOU'RE REALLY HAVING A ROUGH TIME.
IN YOUR SHOE CUBBY AGAIN TODAY.
LOOK.
by Madoka
THEY HAVEN'T EVEN MET THIS BOY, AND THEY'RE ALREADY HIS SLAVES.
THOSE GIRLS AREN'T SANE ANYMORE. THEY'VE ALL LOST A HUGE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT.

AAAAH!
R.I.P.
UGH! THEY CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
I WON'T LET THEM NEAR YOU!
IF YOU HATE ME, SAY SO!
HUH?! RYUSUKE! JUST TELL ME! DO YOU HATE ME?!
I LIKE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIE!
I LIKE YOU, RYU-SUKE!
HOW LONG AM I SUPPOSED TO LIVE LIKE THIS?!
I HATE THIS. I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE... IT HURTS!


WHEN SHE WAS POSSESSED BY THE MAGIC OF THE CROSS-ROADS BOY...
MIDORI HAD STARTED TO REMIND ME OF SUZUE TANAKA BEFORE SHE KILLED HERSELF.
MIDORI ...

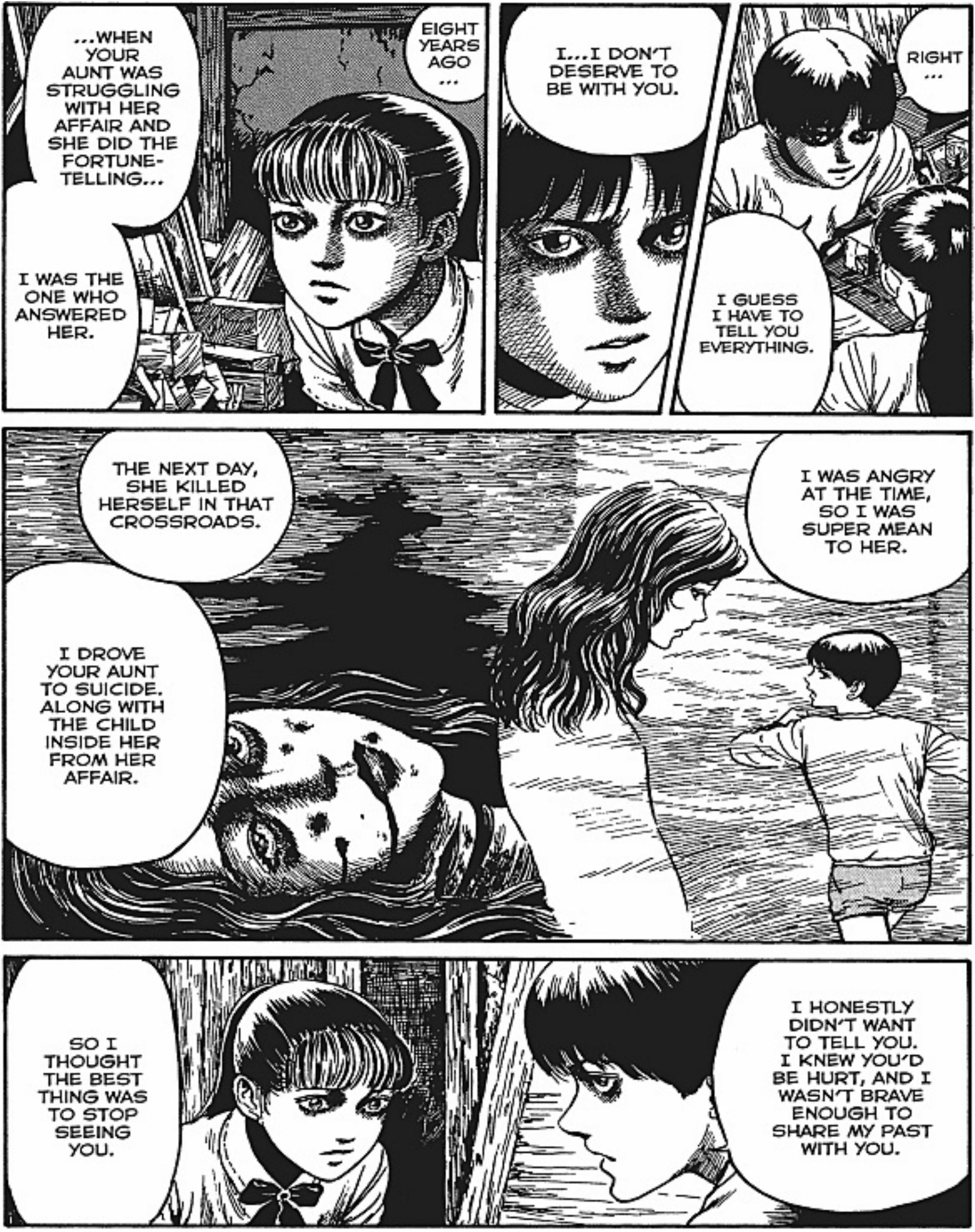

MIDORI ...
SOB... SOB.

IF THIS KEEPS UP, SHE'LL ...
THIS IS BAD ...

NO WAY. IS MIDORI UNDER HIS SPELL, TOO?
SHE DID SEE HIM THAT ONE TIME.

REALLY ?
WHAT IS IT?
BUT... THEN WHY ARE YOU SO COLD TO ME?

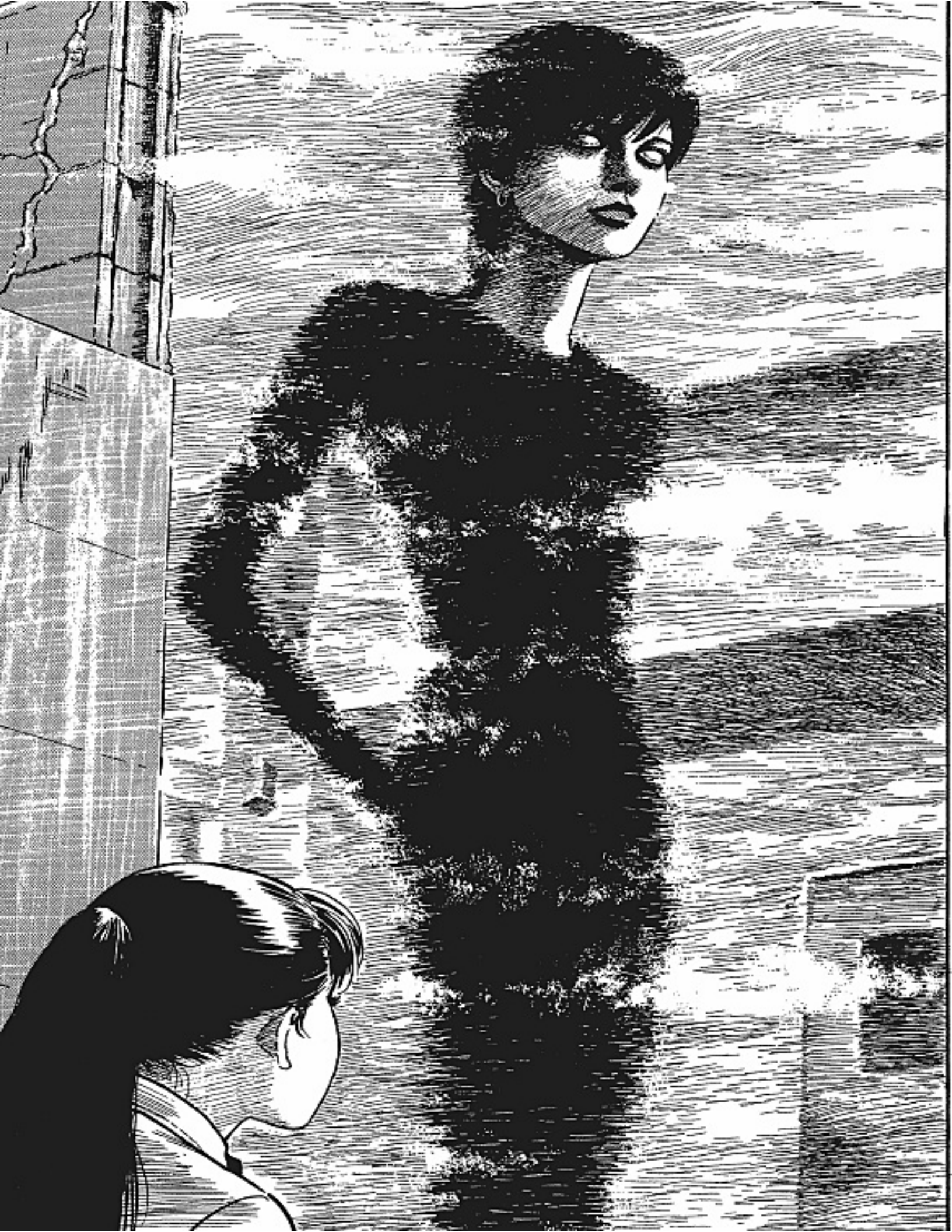
I LIKE YOU, TOO. SO MUCH I COULD DIE...
MIDORI... I...

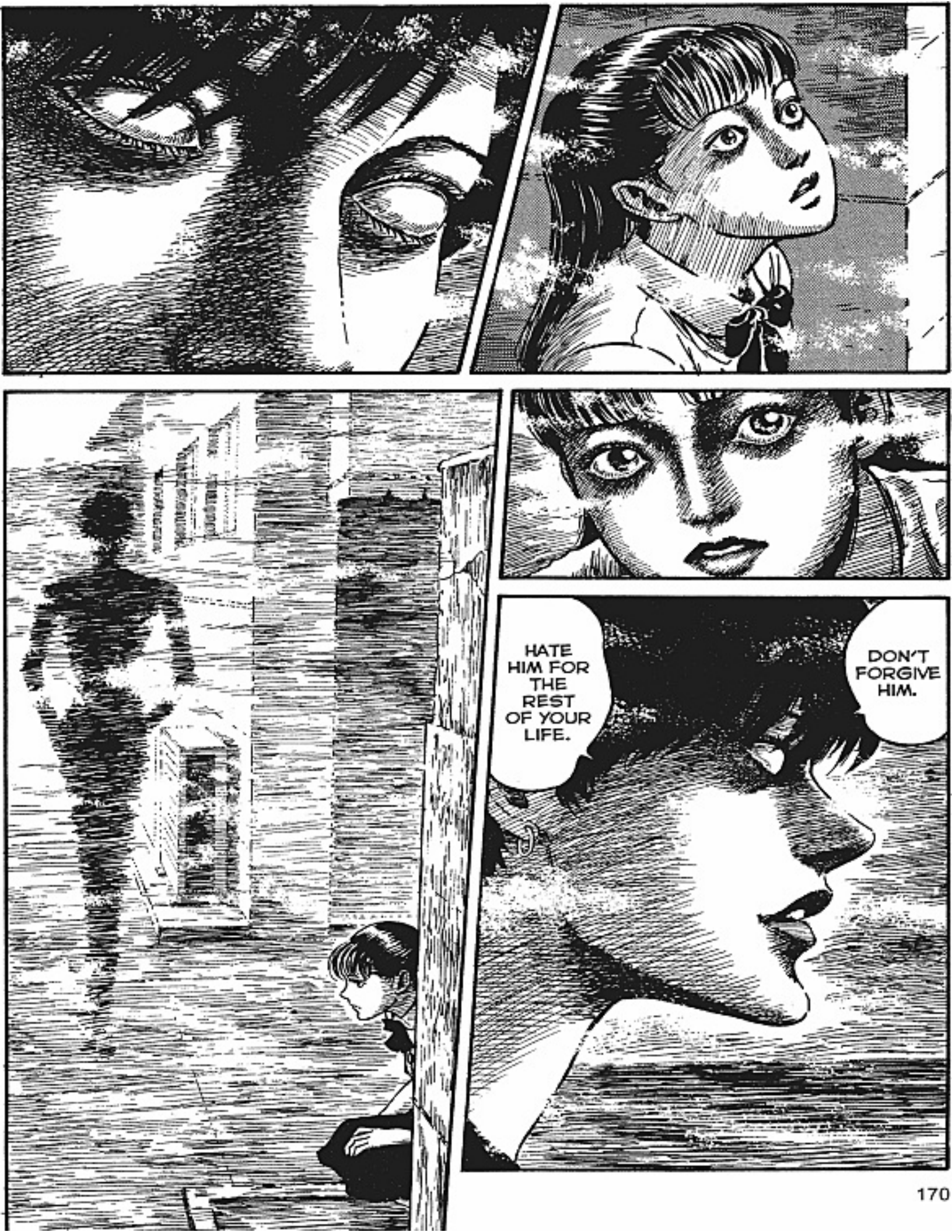

...WHEN YOUR AUNT WAS STRUGGLING WITH HER AFFAIR AND SHE DID THE FORTUNE-TELLING...
EIGHT YEARS AGO ...
I WAS THE ONE WHO ANSWERED HER.
I...I DON'T DESERVE TO BE WITH YOU.
RIGHT ...
I GUESS I HAVE TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING.
THE NEXT DAY, SHE KILLED HERSELF IN THAT CROSSROADS.
I WAS ANGRY AT THE TIME, SO I WAS SUPER MEAN TO HER.
I DROVE YOUR AUNT TO SUICIDE. ALONG WITH THE CHILD INSIDE HER FROM HER AFFAIR.
SO I THOUGHT THE BEST THING WAS TO STOP SEEING YOU.
I HONESTLY DIDN'T WANT TO TELL YOU. I KNEW YOU'D BE HURT, AND I WASN'T BRAVE ENOUGH TO SHARE MY PAST WITH YOU.

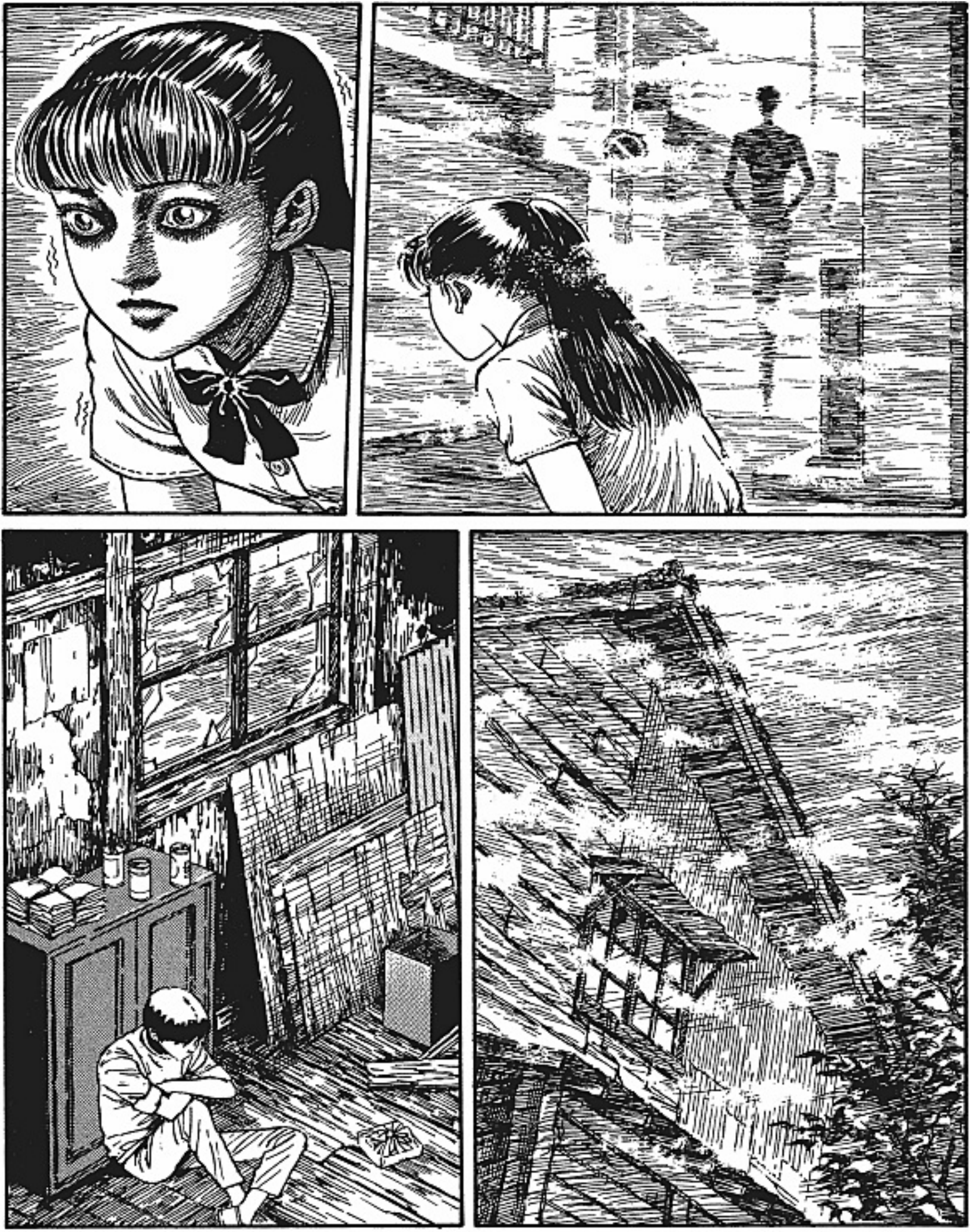
BUT...IF YOU CAN'T FORGIVE ME, THEN I WANT YOU TO FORGET ALL ABOUT ME.
SO I'LL COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT. IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME, THEN BE MY GIRLFRIEND.
AND IF THIS KEEPS UP, YOU'RE GOING TO END UP LIKE SUZUE.
BUT I GUESS THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I CAN'T GET OVER YOU EITHER.
REMEM-BER? SUZUE SICK WITH LOVE?
...THINK ABOUT IT.
LET ME...

I DON'T KNOW... WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
AAH!
IT'S BECAUSE OF THE MAN MY AUNT WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH.
IT'S NOT RYU-SUKE'S FAULT.
AND BECAUSE OF THE CROSS-ROADS FORTUNE.
...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS RYUSUKE WHO ANSWERED HER.
BUT...

IT'S NOT RYUSUKE'S FAULT...
IT'S NOT RYUSUKE'S FAULT...
TAK
TAK




HATE HIM FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
DON'T FORGIVE HIM.



IT WAS SOMETHING I'D WONDERED ANY NUMBER OF TIMES.
WHO ON EARTH WAS HE?
I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE WE HAD SOME KIND OF CONNECTION.
IN THE TWO DAYS AFTER MIDORI LEFT...
...I THOUGHT A LOT ABOUT THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS.
KREEE
MIDORI...

MIDORI.
SO THEN ...
I BROUGHT YOU SOME DINNER. HERE.
SORRY I COULDN'T COME LATELY. YOU MUST BE HUNGRY?
YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.
HURRY AND EAT.
Y-YEAH. I THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN.
SO YOU FORGIVE ME?
YES... I WRESTLED WITH IT A BIT, BUT IT'S OKAY. DID YOU THINK I WASN'T COMING BACK?
THANKS.
POK
YEAH.

HA HA HA HA!
TH-THAT'S ...!
PLAD
AAAH!
YOU KILLED MY AUNT AND THE CHILD SHE WAS CARRYING— MY COUSIN.
DID YOU THINK I WOULD FORGIVE YOU?!
I GOT YOU, HUH?! THIS IS JUST THE RIGHT DINNER FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU!
I DECIDED TO HATE YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
I DECIDED I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU!

...MET THE CROSS-ROADS BOY THAT DAY.
SO I...
M-MIDORI ...
I GOT THIS FEELING THAT HE AND I HAD SOME KIND OF CONNECTION.
I COULDN'T STOP SHAKING AFTER HE SAID THAT. IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE THE WORDS OF A STRANGER FOR SOME REASON.
WHAT ?!
AND THAT HE HATES YOU.
HE TOLD ME TO HATE YOU FOREVER.
MY COUSIN. THE BABY MY DEAD AUNT WAS CARRYING.
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT WHO HE COULD BE. AND THERE'S ONE PERSON WHO FITS.
THE BABY WAS ALIVE IN THIS WORLD, BUT KILLED BEFORE HE COULD BE BORN.

WITH THE SAME METHOD YOU USED AS A CHILD.
MAYBE HE'S TRYING TO GET REVENGE ON YOU NOW.
...IS REALLY YOUR AUNT'S CHILD?
SO THEN... YOU'RE SAYING THE CROSS-ROADS BOY...
DON'T BE STUPID. THERE'S NO WAY MY COUSIN WOULD MAKE ME KILL MYSELF.
WHAT? DO YOU THINK I'M GOING TO KILL MYSELF BECAUSE I MET HIM?
I HOPE YOU LEARN JUST HOW PAINFUL IT IS FOR PEOPLE TO HATE YOU.
I HOPE YOU SUFFER HORRIBLY.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
AH! MIDORI, WAIT!

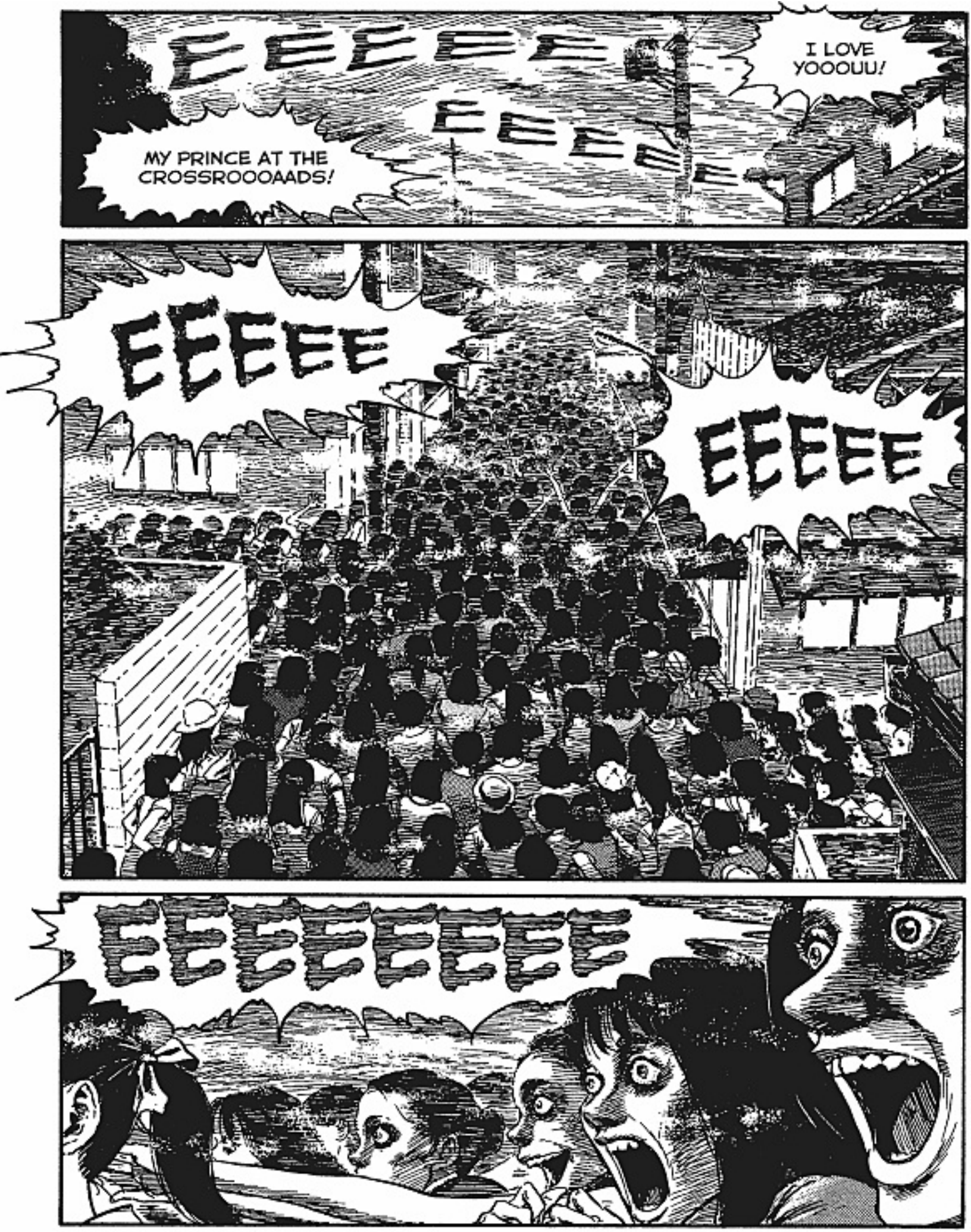
THIS IS BAD. I'M ACTUALLY WORRIED.
MIDORI !!
DAMMIT... THE FOG'S SO THICK!
MIDORI!
HAAH, HAAH.
STILL ...
...IS THE BOY REALLY HER AUNT'S CHILD?

HAAH, HAAH.
EXCUSE ME. HAVE YOU SEEN A JUNIOR HIGH GIRL AROUND HERE?
IT'S HIM!
AH!
OH NO!
AAH!

I WANTED TO SEE YOU!
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIE!
I LOVE YOU!
ME TOO.
ME TOO.
MY PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROADS... PLEASE SPEAK TO ME.
LOOK IN A MIRROR. YOU'RE SKIN AND BONES... IF THIS KEEPS UP, YOU'LL DIE.
ALL OF YOU... COME BACK TO YOUR SENSES.
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
...

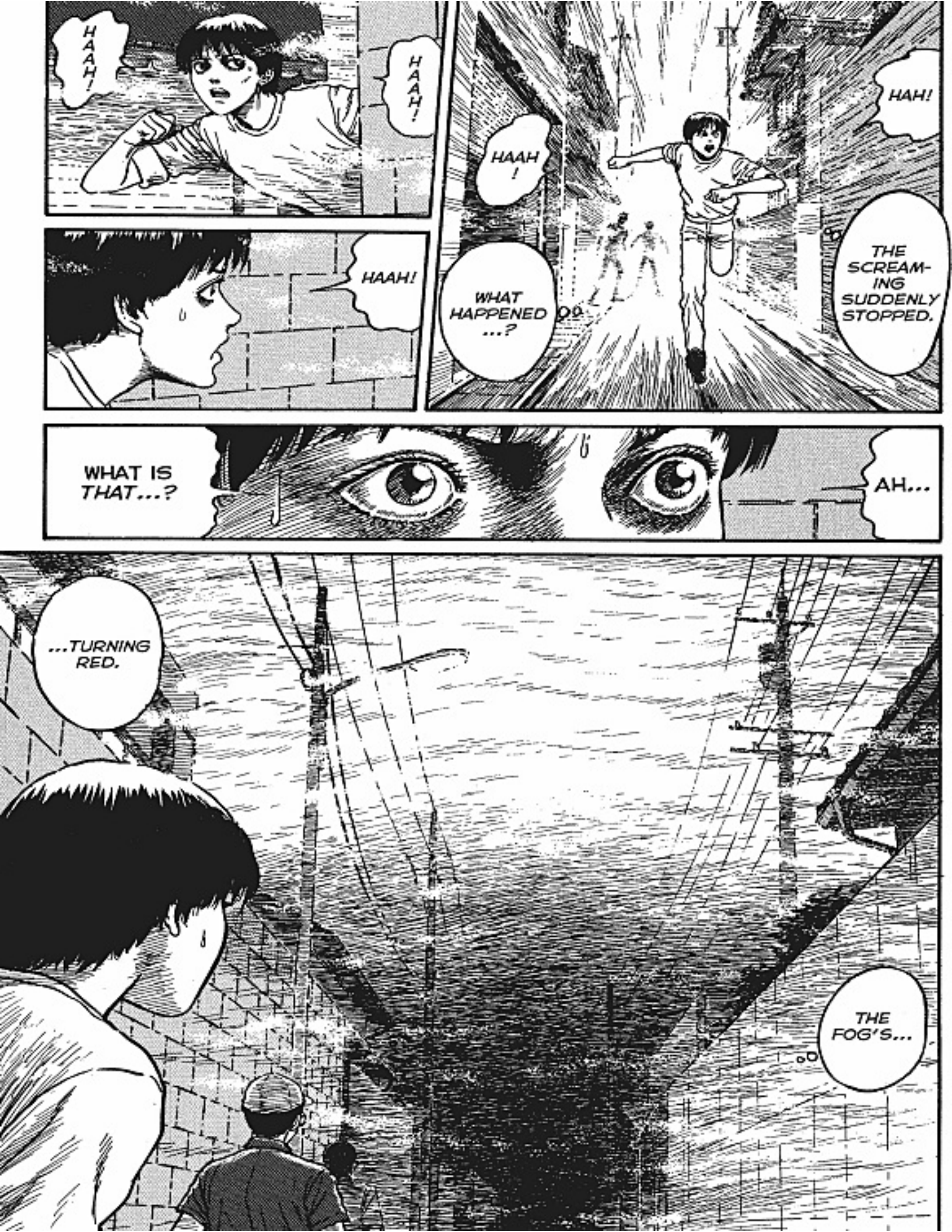
...
...
AND THIS GUY'S WEARING WHITE CLOTHES. I'M PRETTY SURE *HE* WEARS BLACK.
WEIRD... I HEARD IT WOULD BE VERY THRILLING WHEN WE HEARD HIS WORDS.
YOU'RE MAKING A TERRIBLE MISTAKE!
FORGET ABOUT HIM ALREADY.

HUH? THAT SCREAMING, IT'S SUPER LOUD.
A WHOLE BUNCH OF VOICES AT ONCE...
IT'S THE BOY AT THE CROSS-ROADS!
YES! THEY'VE FOUND THE *REAL* CROSSROADS BOY!
COME ON...
WE HAVE TO HURRY!


EEEEEE
EEEEE
I LOVE YOOOUU!
MY PRINCE AT THE CROSSROOOAADS!
EEEEE
EEEEE
EEEEEEEEEE

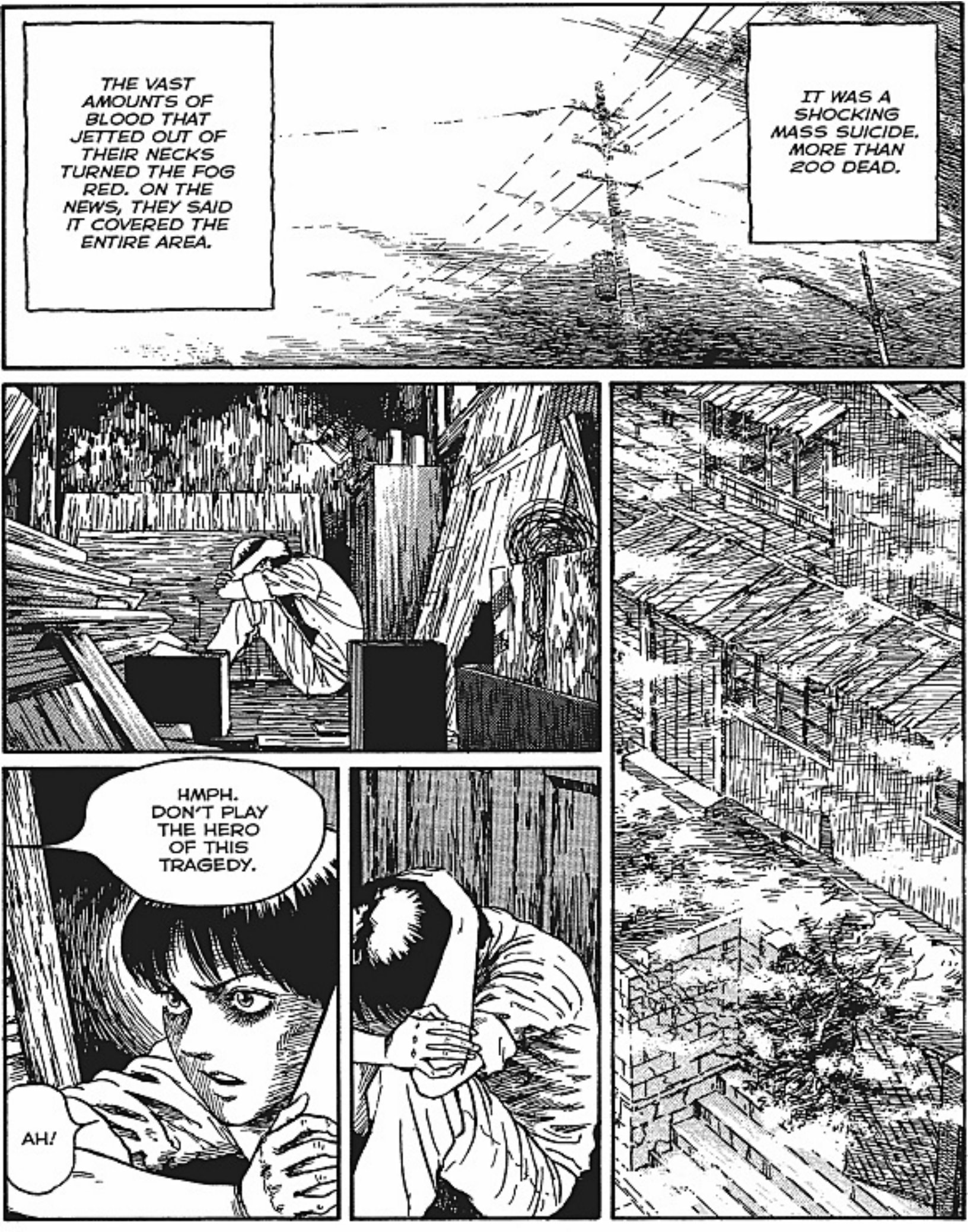
MY SWEET PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROOOOOADS!
I LOVE YOOO-OUUUU!
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIIIIIEE!
EEEEEE
EEEEEE

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIIIIIEEEE!!
THEN DIE.
CHK CHK
CHK CHK
CHK CHK


HAAH!
HAAH!
HAAH!
HAAH!
HAH!
THE SCREAM-ING SUDDENLY STOPPED.
WHAT HAPPENED ...?
WHAT IS THAT...?
AH...
...TURNING RED.
THE FOG'S...

AH!
WHAT...
WHAT HAP-PENED?!
TH-THE CROSS-ROADS BOY...

I COULDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE.
I WAS OVER-WHELMED BY HIS DISTURBING APPEAR-ANCE.
INTO THE DRIFTING RED FOG...
THEN I WENT IN THE DIREC-TION HE'D COME FROM.
W-WHAT IS THIS?!

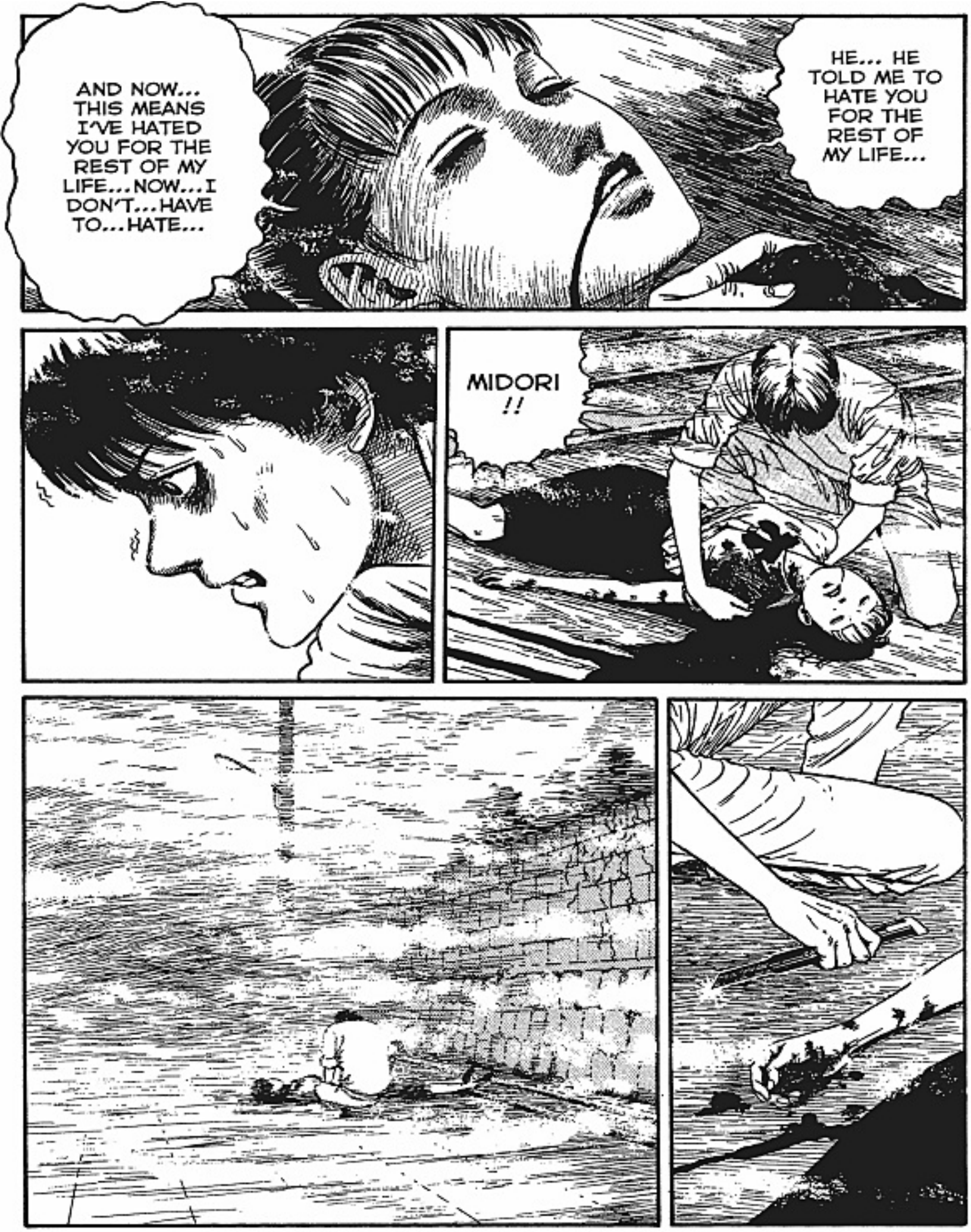

THE VAST AMOUNTS OF BLOOD THAT JETTED OUT OF THEIR NECKS TURNED THE FOG RED. ON THE NEWS, THEY SAID IT COVERED THE ENTIRE AREA.
IT WAS A SHOCKING MASS SUICIDE. MORE THAN 200 DEAD.
HMPH. DON'T PLAY THE HERO OF THIS TRAGEDY.
AH!

YES...THE ONE THEY'RE LOOKING FOR IS YOU. THE WORLD STILL THINKS YOU'RE THE BOY AT THE CROSSROADS.
THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR HIM, TOO, AS AN IMPORTANT SUSPECT.
THE MEDIA HAVE CALLED FOR EVERYONE TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A BOY WHO CAUSED THE MASS SUICIDE.
THE TOWN'S IN REAL TROUBLE RIGHT NOW.
THE SEEDS YOU SOWED EIGHT YEARS AGO ARE WHY ALL THIS IS HAPPENING NOW!
AND YOU REALLY ARE THE TRUE CULPRIT.
AND SHE WOULD FORCE-FEED ME THINGS SHE DELIBERATELY MADE TO TASTE AWFUL.
MIDORI SHOWED UP AT THE SHACK EVERY DAY AFTER THAT TO SPEW HATE AT ME.
IF I TOLD THE POLICE, THEY'D ARREST YOU. BUT I WON'T REPORT YOU YET. I WANT YOU TO SUFFER MORE.
C'MON! EAT UP!

YOU DEMON! MURDERING MONSTER!
GOD OF PESTI-LENCE!
AND GRADUALLY, HER FACE FILLED WITH PAIN.
GIVE ME MY AUNT BACK!
DASH
DASH
HER HATRED SEEMED TO GROW WITH EVERY PASSING DAY.
MUR-DERER!
I CAN'T WATCH YOU LIKE THIS ANYMORE.
STOP THIS ALREADY.
HE'S DEFINITELY POS-SESSED YOU!
MIDORI.
PANT
PANT
PANT
I'LL TURN MYSELF IN! I PROBABLY WON'T GET OUT FOR A LONG TIME. SO THIS IS GOODBYE FOR US! PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU. CAST ASIDE YOUR HATE!
LISTEN TO ME, MIDORI! I'M GOING TO THE POLICE!

PANT PANT
OTHER-WISE... IF THIS KEEPS UP, YOU'LL...
MIDORI!
...
CHK CHK CHK
MIDORI!

!
MIDORI!
!
RYU-
SUKE...
...
MIDORI!
MIDORI
!

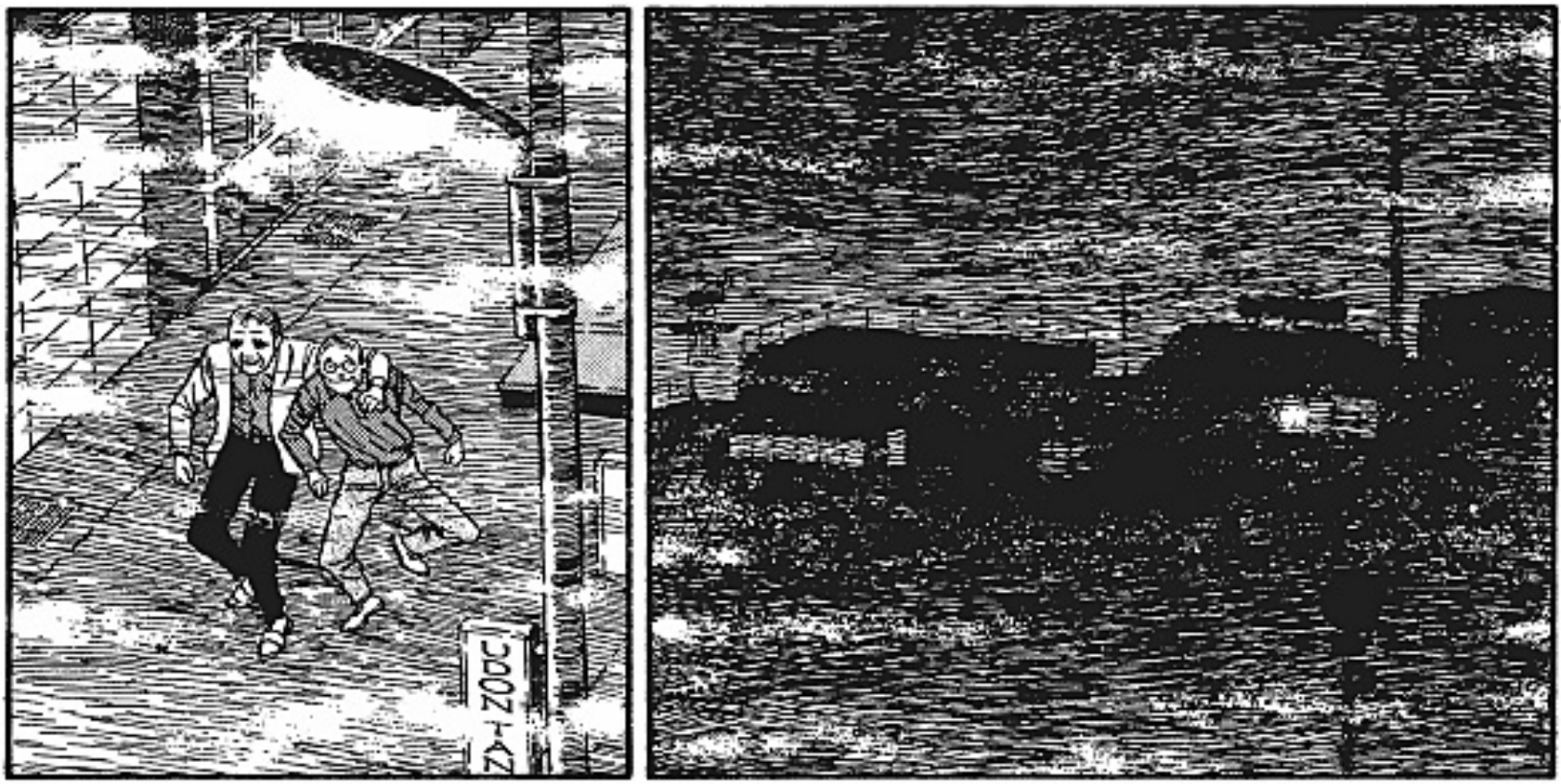

AND NOW... THIS MEANS I'VE HATED YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE... NOW... I DON'T... HAVE TO... HATE...
HE... HE TOLD ME TO HATE YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...
MIDORI !!

ER...

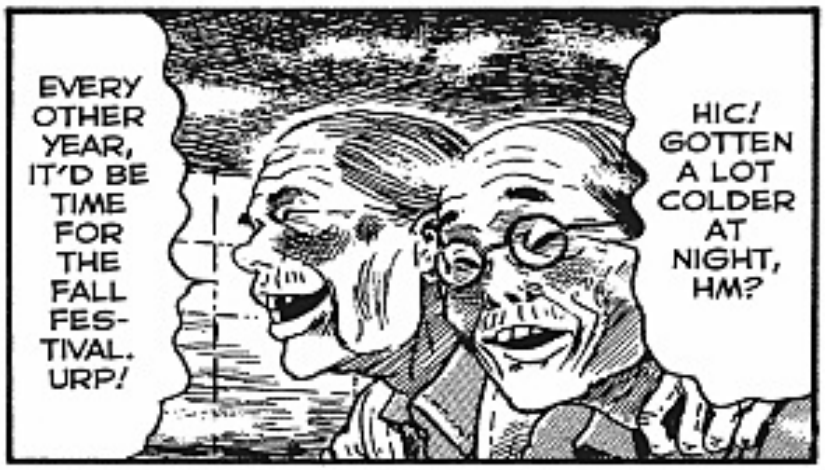
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME ASKING FOR A CROSSROADS FORTUNE.
TO HAVE NOWHERE TO TURN AT THIS AGE... AH, IT'S EMBAR-RASSING.
GOT A MINUTE?
SAY.
I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY GIRLS I'VE MADE CRY. EVEN AFTER I GOT MARRIED, STILL HAD TO HAVE MY LOVERS, YOU KNOW? BUT WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR FUN, THE BILL COMES DUE AT SOME POINT.
SO BASICALLY, WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, THE GIRLS COULDN'T KEEP THEIR HANDS OFF ME. SO SURE, THEY DID FORTUNE-TELLING ABOUT ME, BUT I NEVER DID IT MYSELF.
BUT WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT—SHE KILLED MY SON! IT WAS ON THE NEWS, SO MAYBE YOU HEARD?
AND THEN, AFTER THAT, SHE SET HERSELF ON FIRE!
JUST RECENTLY, I DUMPED MY LOVER WHEN SHE GOT PREGNANT.

ANOTHER WOMAN GOT PREGNANT, YOU SEE.
...IT'S BEEN EIGHT YEARS SINCE THEN.
CUT HER THROAT AFTER GETTING A FORTUNE.
AWFUL. BAD AFTER-TASTE.
DO YOU KNOW HOW IT FEELS WHEN A WOMAN COMMITS SUICIDE ON A MAN OUT OF SPITE?
...I HAD ANOTHER ONE DIE ON ME WAY BACK WHEN.
BASI-CALLY, YOU SEE ...
YES! I HAD A SON AT THE TIME! MY ELDEST, SIX YEARS OLD... THE ONE THIS WOMAN KILLED WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.
SHE WAS A GOOD WOMAN. VERY DISCREET. AND SHE DIDN'T KILL MY CHILD LIKE THIS WOMAN.
I ADORE MY SON. I LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR HIM. HE DISAPPEARED ON A VERY FOGGY DAY. I REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS WEARING. BLACK TOP AND BOTTOMS.
BUT MY ELDEST SON DISAPPEARED EIGHT YEARS AGO! RIGHT AFTER THAT WOMAN COMMITTED SUICIDE.

IF HE'S STILL ALIVE, HE'D BE ABOUT YOUR AGE.
WE NEVER DID FIND HIM. A DISAPPEARANCE ON A FOGGY DAY IN THIS TOWN, THAT'S GOD PLAYING TRICKS. YOU'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE UP.
THIS IS MY PUNISHMENT FOR ABANDONING HER.
I'M AT A LOSS HERE.
WELL, ALL THAT HAPPENED AND NOW I'M FACING A DIVORCE.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? GET DIVORCED AND MARRY MY CURRENT LOVER?
HANG ON A SEC!
OH... HEY!


ZOO

AAAAAAH!
STILL HAVEN'T FOUND 'IM, I GUESS.


EVERY OTHER YEAR, IT'D BE TIME FOR THE FALL FES-TIVAL. URP!
HIC! GOTTEN A LOT COLDER AT NIGHT, HM?

MM-HMM. BY THE WAY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT CROSS-ROADS BOY OR WHO-EVER?
BUT THEY CALLED IT OFF THIS YEAR. AFTER AN INCIDENT LIKE THAT AND ALL.
Y'MEAN THE WANTED BOY?

HUFF
?
EEE!
HAAH! HAAH!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY THE PANIC?
HIC!
HM?
WHAT D'YOU MEAN? YOU CAN'T HEAR IT?
OPEN YOUR EARS AND LISTEN REAL CLOSE!
EEEEEE
EEEEEEE

IT'S THOSE GIRLS SCREAM-ING!
GRAMPS! DON'T GO ANY FARTHER! GO BACK!
WHAT ON EARTH ?
EEEEE
AAAH... SOME-ONE'S SCREAM-ING... NO... IT'S A WHOLE CROWD.
THEY'RE SCREAM-ING!!
THE GIRLS FROM THE MASS SUICIDE!!
THOSE GIRLS?
WHAT ...? HIC...
EEEEEEE
I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S TRUE!! I SAW THEM JUST NOW. THAT'S WHY I'M RUNNING AWAY!
WHAAAT? DON'T GO TEASING YOUR ELDERS. HIC!
EEEEEEE
EEEEEEE
EEEEEEE
WHAT ...?

EEEEEEEE
HIC!
HMPH. MAKING FUN OF HIS ELDERS.
HEEEY, GRAMPS! DON'T!
EEEEEEEE
PROB'LY ALL OVER SOME POP STAR. NO RESPECT FOR THE LATE HOUR.
THESE YOUNG THINGS REALLY CAN BELT IT OUT, HM? HIC!
EEEEE
HEEEE

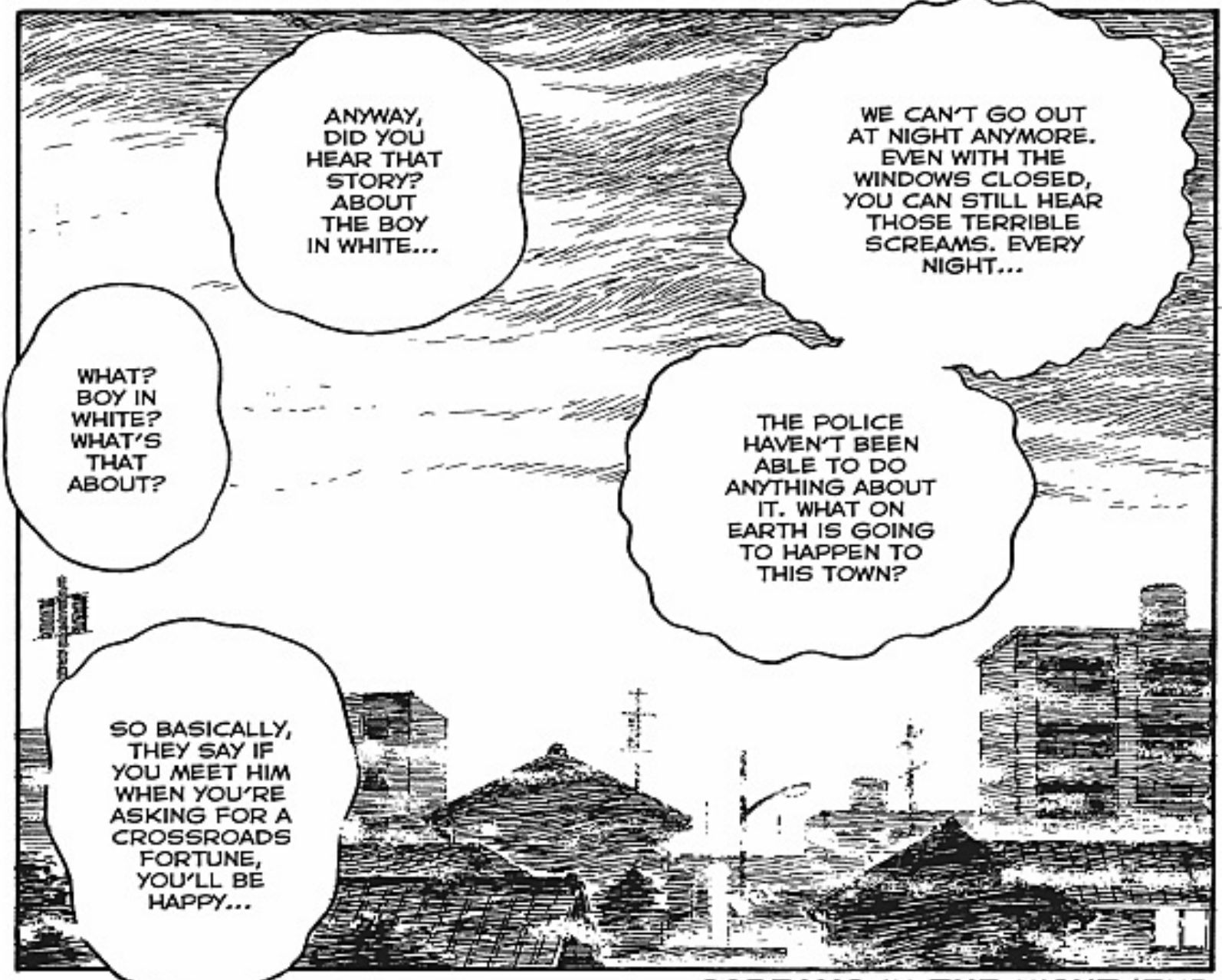
HEY!
PAT
DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?
HEY! YOU LOT!

REBELLE

WILL I FIND LOOOOOOVE?
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIIIIEEEE!
YOU'LL NEVER FIND LOVE.
YOU WON'T...
AAAH!

EEEEE
EEEEE
STOP! YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY!
EEEEE
AAAAAH
HEEEEEEEEEE

CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK

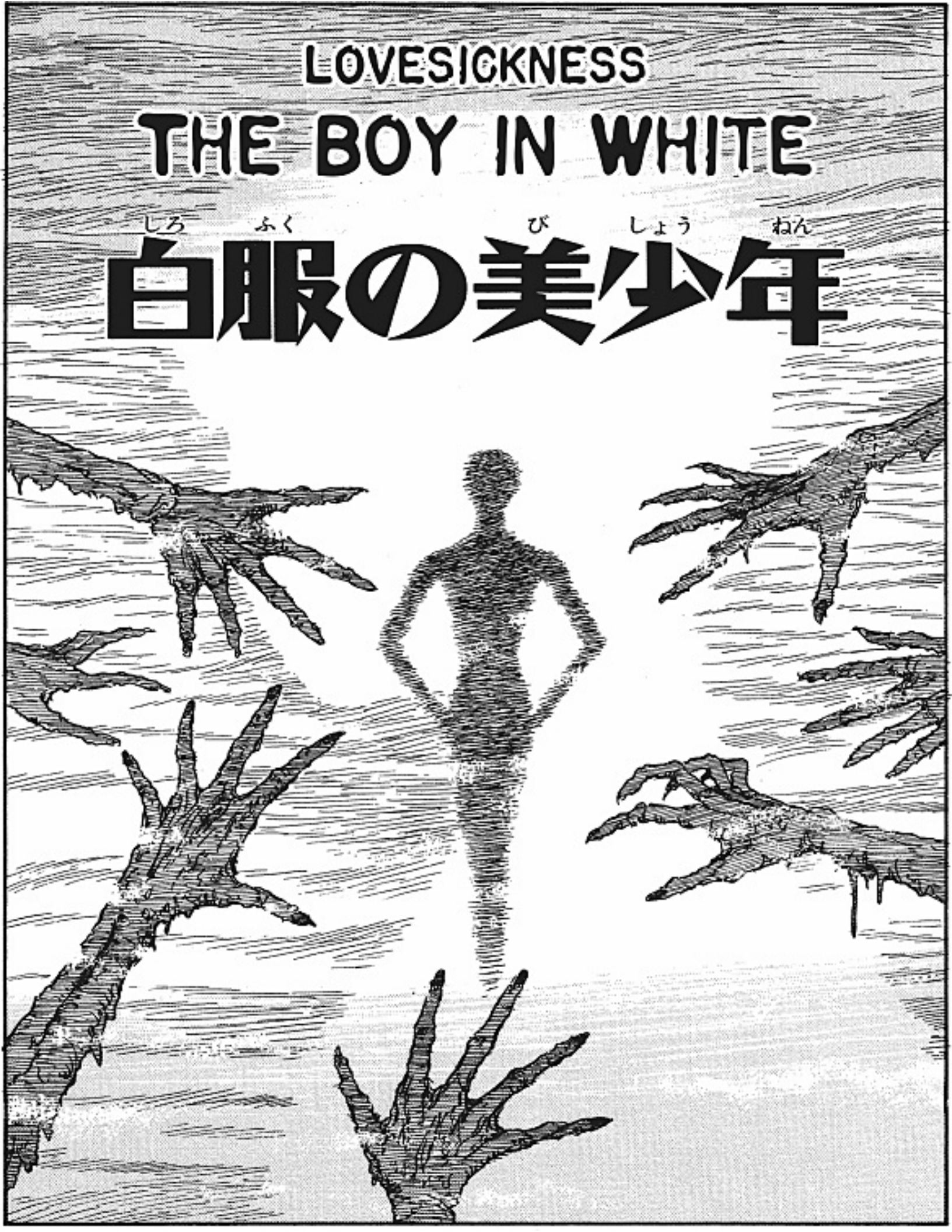


SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT/END

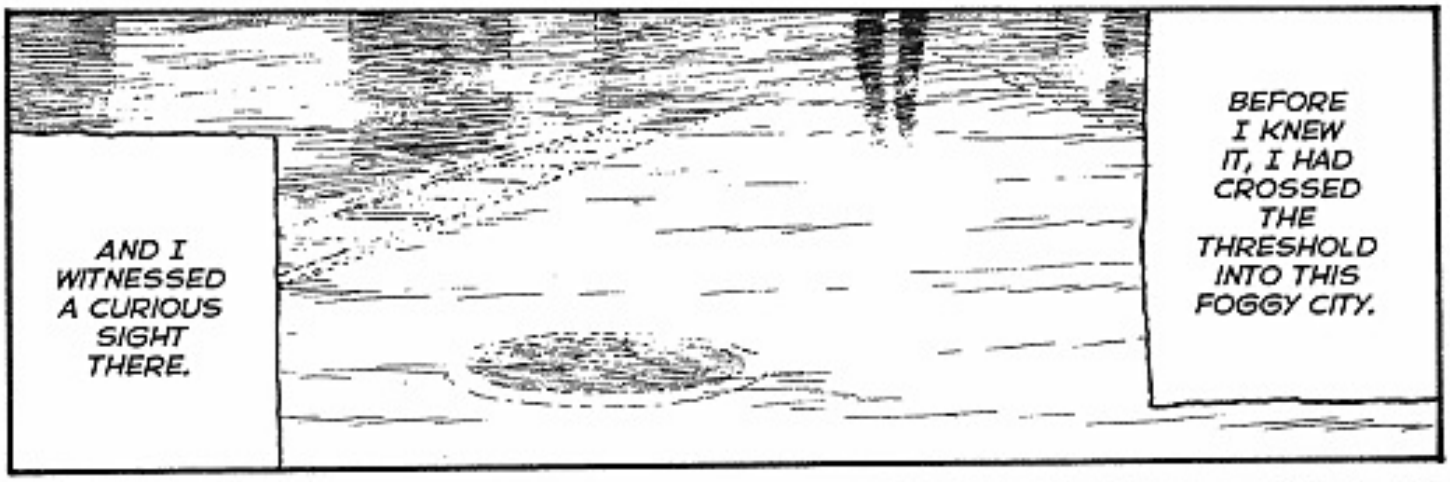
LOVESICKNESS

THE BOY IN WHITE

白服の美少年



A TOWN OF TROU-BLES...
NAZUMI.


BEFORE I KNEW IT, I HAD CROSSED THE THRESHOLD INTO THIS FOGGY CITY.
AND I WITNESSED A CURIOUS SIGHT THERE.

WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHISPER
GOOD FORTUNE TOWARD THE SOUTH.
I'M IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T LOVE ME...
IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU'LL MAKE IT.
UM. WILL I GET INTO THE SCHOOL I WANT?
SO THIS IS THE CROSSROADS FORTUNE I'VE HEARD ABOUT...

FIRST, PLEASE LISTEN TO MY PROB-LEMS.
MY HUSBAND'S INCREDIBLY VIOLENT.
SORRY. I'M IN A HURRY RIGHT NOW.
I'VE BEEN DOWNSIZED...
THE PEOPLE HERE ARE HEAD OVER HEELS FOR FORTUNE-TELLING.
IT'S HAPPENING IN EVERY CORNER OF TOWN.
...BUT TELL MY FOR-TUNE?
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
EXCUSE ME.

I LOST MY DAUGHTER IN THE MASS SUICIDE.
IT'S BEEN SO HARD TO KEEP GOING... HOW SHOULD I LIVE MY LIFE NOW?
...
WHAT IS IT?
YES. MY DAUGHTER'S SOUL IS STILL NOT AT PEACE.
EVERY NIGHT, THE GIRLS' SPIRITS ROAM ABOUT TOWN...
THEY WERE TOLD TO DIE BY A BOY IN BLACK, YES?
THE MASS SUICIDE... WHEN HUNDREDS OF GIRLS SLIT THEIR THROATS.
"WILL I FIND LOVE?" THEY ASK...
"MY PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROADS, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIE..."
THEY SCREAM ALL NIGHT LONG, TOTALLY TRANS-FORMED...
...

EEEEEEEEE
EEEEEEEEE

EEEEEE
EEEEEE
EEEEEE
...
EEEEEE
EEEEEE
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

MY PRINCE AT THE CROSS-ROAAAAADS!
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I COULD DIIIIEEEE!
WILL I FIND LOOOOOOVE?
HEH HEH HEH.
OF COURSE YOU WON'T. DIE. AGAIN AND AGAIN.
EEEEE

EEEEEEE
OH!
J-JUST LIKE THE RUMORS SAY... THE MEDIA AND THE CROWDS ARE SAID TO HAVE RUN OFF.
HEEEE

GO SHOW YOUR RUINED SELVES TO YOUR BELOVED FAMILIES TONIGHT.
MAKE THEM SMILE.
IF YOU LOVE ME SO MUCH, THEN ENTERTAIN ME.
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD
THD

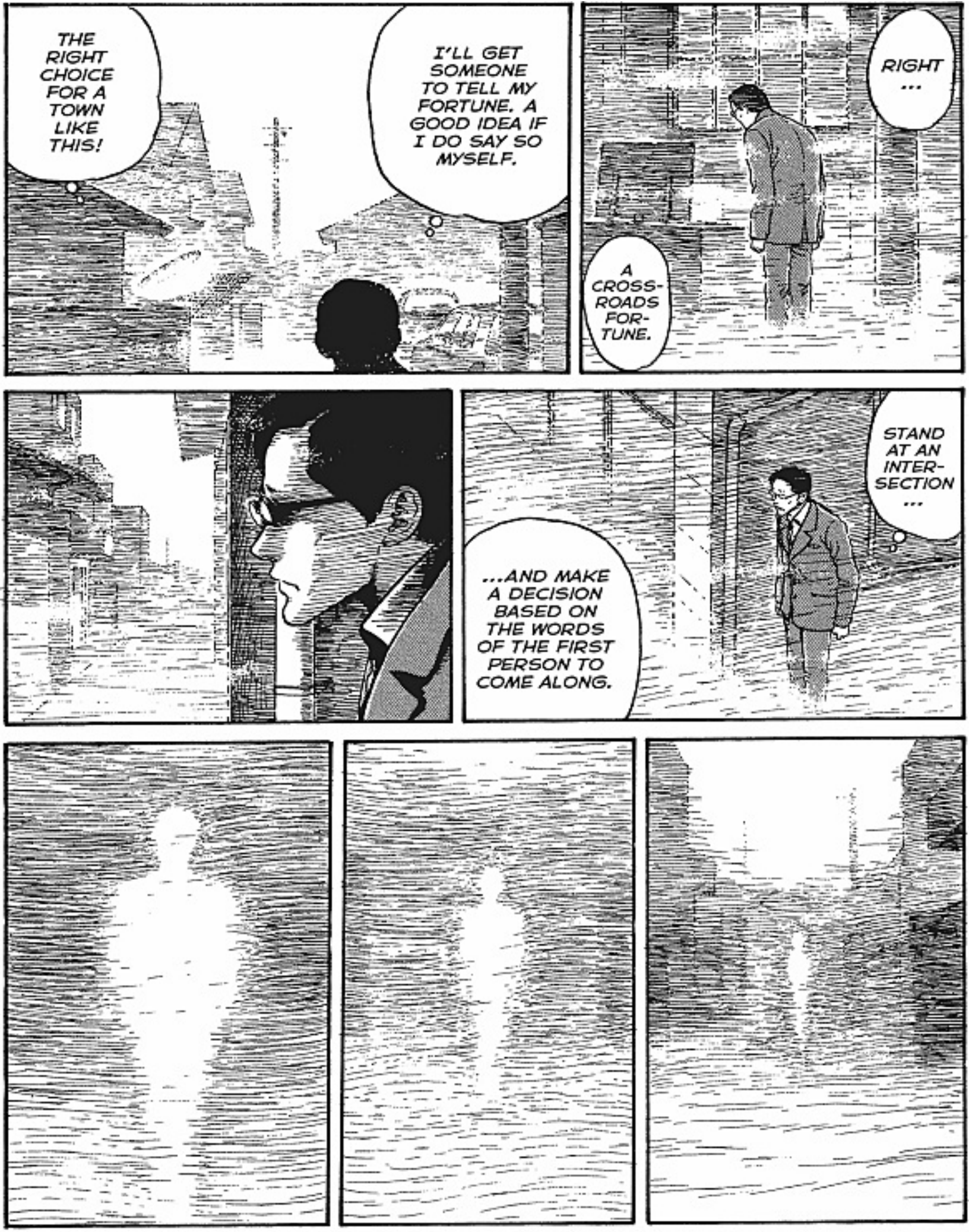
VZOUK VZOUK
KNOCK KNOCK
KNOCK KNOCK
DAAAAD!
MOOOOOM!
MAYBE JUST THE WIND?
WAS THERE A KNOCK AT THE WINDOW JUST NOW?
SHFK
YURIKO!
YURIKO... THAT'S YURIKO'S VOICE!
AH!
KNOCK KNOCK
DAAAAD!
MOOOOOM!

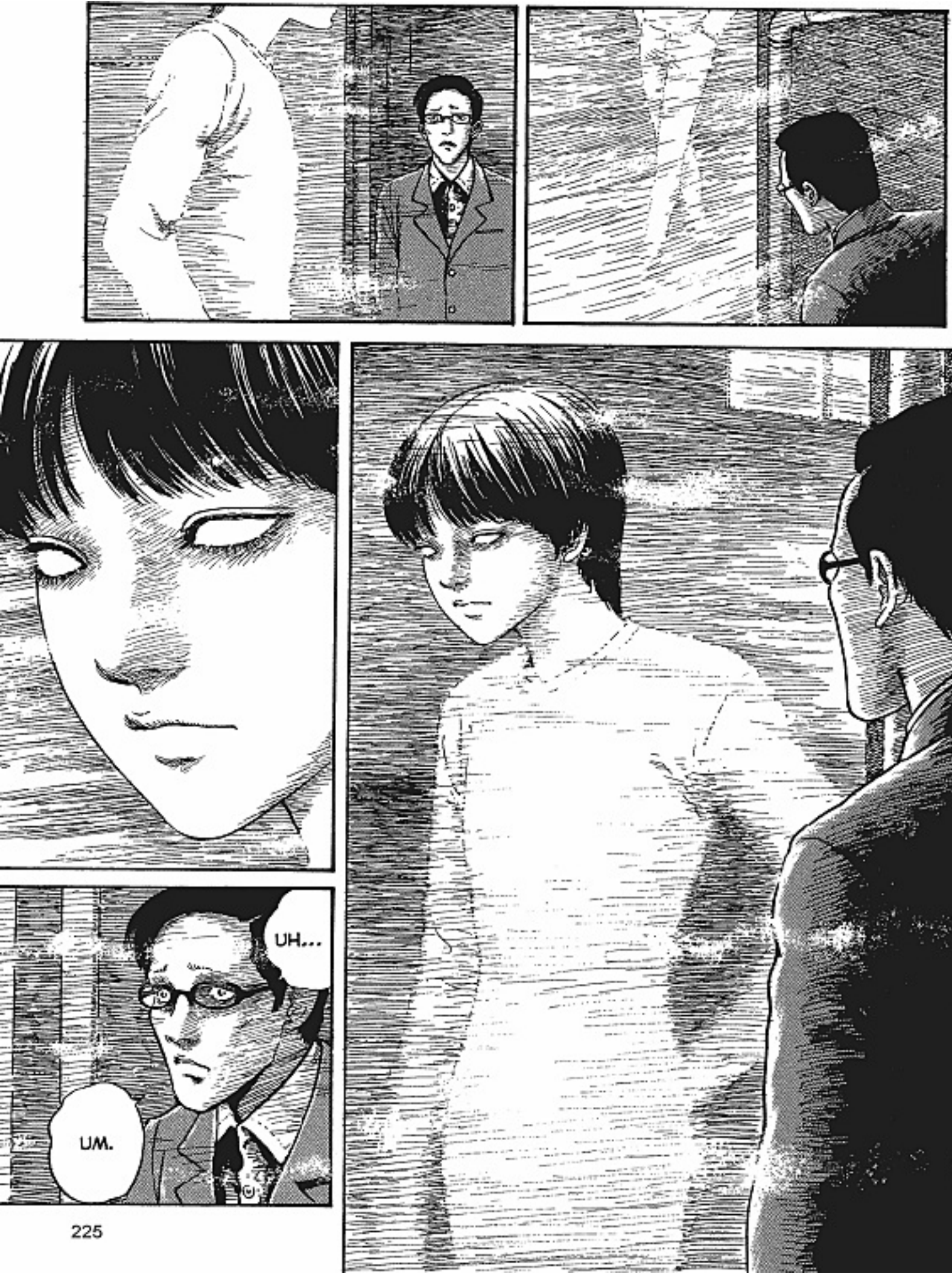
AAA-
AAH!!
UNH
...

EEEEEEE
EEEEEE
AAAAH!
HEE HEE
HEE HEE
HNGAAH!
HA HA HA HA HA
EEEEE!
HHHHHH
EEEEEE
HA
HA
HA!
HEH
HEH
HEH.
EEEEEEE
HEEEEE

...IT SMELLS LIKE DEATH HERE.
THIS TOWN...
OR... PERHAPS I WAS UNCONSCIOUSLY HEADING FOR THIS TOWN.
SUCH THICK FOG. WHERE AM I EVEN WALKING RIGHT NOW?
I'M TRAVELING WITHOUT A DESTINATION TO BEGIN WITH.
BUT... IT'S NOT A PROBLEM IF I GET LOST.
...
WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO...
EXCUSE ME.
I'M SORRY. YOU'RE FREE TO DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE...
SHE LAUGHS AT ME. SHE'S UNRECOGNIZABLE...
SOB SOB... PLEASE TELL ME. MY DAUGHTER... MY DEAD DAUGHTER'S ACTING SO HORRIBLY TO ME.

UM.
PLEASE LISTEN...
TELL MY FOR-TUNE ...?
UM. EXCUSE ME?
UM. YOU THERE ...
BUT...A COWARD LIKE ME... I'M STILL NOT SURE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
I CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS FOREVER.
I HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION.
I WALK AND WALK, BUT IT'S NOTHING BUT CROSSROADS FORTUNES.
BUT I'M IN NO POSITION TO LISTEN TO ANYONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS.


THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR A TOWN LIKE THIS!
I'LL GET SOMEONE TO TELL MY FORTUNE. A GOOD IDEA IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
RIGHT ...
A CROSS-ROADS FOR-TUNE.
STAND AT AN INTER-SECTION ...
...AND MAKE A DECISION BASED ON THE WORDS OF THE FIRST PERSON TO COME ALONG.


UH...
UM.

...
I'D LIKE TO BE AT PEACE NOW.
PLEASE TELL ME AN EASY WAY TO DIE.
I'M... UTTERLY EXHAUSTED BY LIFE.
I DO...
YOU WANT TO BE AT PEACE?
IF YOU DO, THE FOG WILL CLEAR.
THEN GO AROUND THE INTERSECTIONS AND ANSWER A HUNDRED TIMES.
...

BUT I ASKED HIM TO TELL ME HOW TO DIE... THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
SO HE MEANS GO AND TELL A HUNDRED CROSSROADS FORTUNES?
GO AROUND THE INTERSEC-TIONS AND ANSWER A HUNDRED TIMES?
WHO WAS THAT BOY...?
AND I FELT HE HAD THE CURIOUS POWER TO CALM A PERSON'S HEART.
HE WAS A STRANGE BOY... ALL IN WHITE.
EXCUSE ME?
WELL, I'M IN NO HURRY.
I CAN JUST AS WELL DIE AFTER DOING THIS.

I SEE. I'LL AT LEAST DO SOME GOOD BEFORE I DIE.
I'LL ANSWER THE CROSSROADS FORTUNES SERIOUSLY.
HELLO ...?

YOU'RE REALLY PASSION-ATE ABOUT CROSS-ROADS FORTUNES, *HUH?*
NO, WE'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU AND GOT CURIOUS.
WHAT IS IT? SEEKING A FORTUNE?
WE DID, TOO.
I KNEW IT!
...
...MAYBE RUN INTO THE BOY IN WHITE?
DID YOU...
IS THAT A PROBLEM ?
...
WE'VE ALREADY DONE MORE THAN A HUNDRED, THOUGH.
NOW WE'RE DOING IT BECAUSE WE WANT TO.
I'M MITSURU OHTA. THIS IS MIYUKI KOMAKI.
WE'RE ALSO MAKING THE ROUNDS.

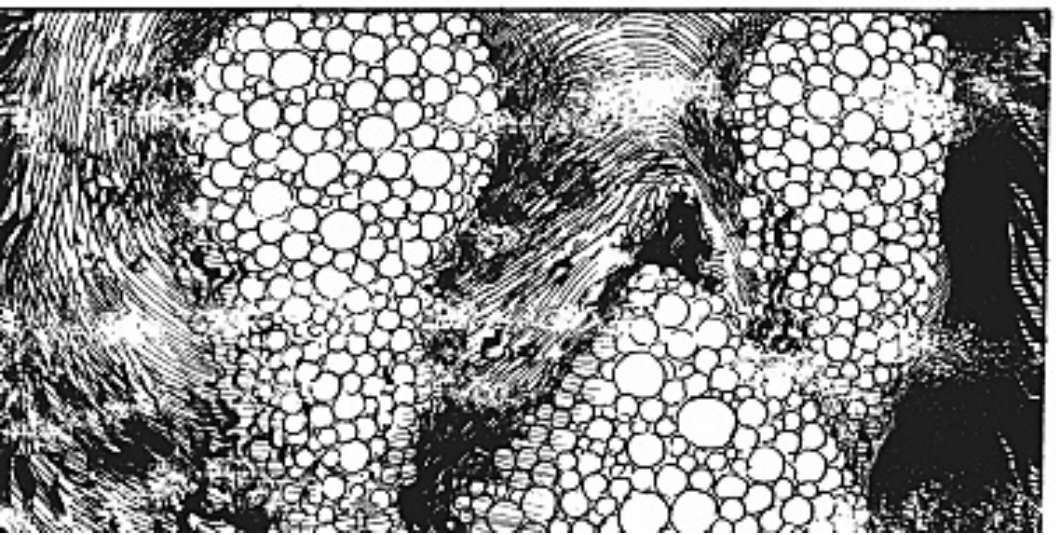
HE SAID SOME POSITIVE THINGS TO ME.
...STANDING AT AN INTERSEC-TION BECAUSE OF MY RELATION-SHIP.
HE GAVE ME THE STRENGTH TO LIVE.
I MET THE BOY IN WHITE WHEN I WAS...
...
I WAS IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T LOVE ME.
THE BOY IN WHITE TOLD ME I WOULD FIND LOVE.
HOW ABOUT IT? WILL YOU DO THE ROUNDS WITH US FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS?
HE GAVE US HAPPINESS.
SO WE WANT TO DO THE SAME FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

AND THEN, THE NEXT EVENING ...
IN A CURIOUS TURN, I STARTED PATROLLING THE INTERSECTIONS WITH THEM.
IT'S... SO QUIET TONIGHT.
IF HE WERE THE SCREAMS WOULD BE ECHOING THROUGH TOWN.
LISTEN. YOU CAN'T HEAR THE SPIRITS SCREAMING... THAT'S BECAUSE THE BOY IN BLACK'S NOT HERE.
WHAT?
IT IS... THE BOY IN BLACK HASN'T SHOWN UP YET.

OR MAYBE THE DEVIL?
I DON'T KNOW. IS HE HUMAN? SOMETHING FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE?
WHO ON EARTH IS HE?
THIS BOY IN BLACK, THE ONE WHO MADE SO MANY GIRLS HIS SLAVES...
WHY?
ANYWAY, PLEASE BE CAREFUL TONIGHT.
THE ONLY THING I CAN SAY IS THAT HE...
...
...THE GHOSTS ARE ALL OVER, ASKING FOR CROSS-ROADS FOR-TUNES.
BECAUSE ON NIGHTS WHEN BLACK'S NOT HERE...
...COMPLETELY LACKS ANYTHING YOU'D CALL "LOVE."

SHOULD WE GET TO IT?
WELL ...

BRBLE
BRBLE



AAH!

UMMMMM.
WILL I FIND LOOO-OOOVE?
LISTEN TO ME.
YOU'LL NEVER FIND LOVE WITH THE BOY IN BLACK! BECAUSE HE'S EVIL.
FORGET ABOUT HIM AND CROSS OVER!
HEE HEE HEE
KAH HA HA HA HA

!
SHAK
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK
EEE ...

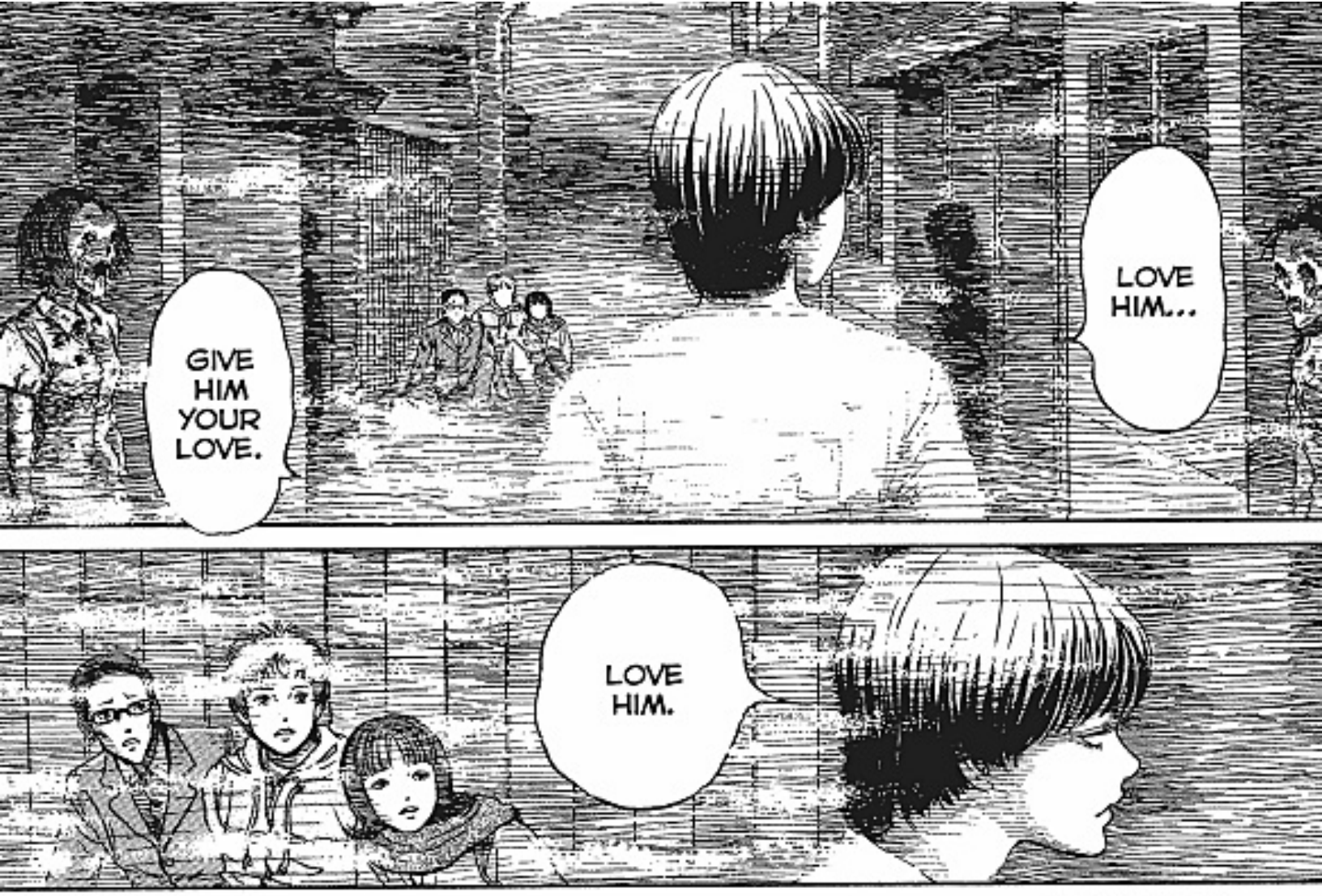
KRK
KRK
KRK
S-STOP IT.
HEE HEE HEE

BOMF
HEE HEE HEE
IT'S GONE...
...
LOOK AT THE INTERSECTIONS AHEAD...
BUT... WE CAN'T GIVE UP.
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE TELL THEM, THE GHOSTS WON'T LISTEN.
MAYBE... THE GHOSTS THEMSELVES HAVE ALREADY BECOME EVIL PRESENCES.

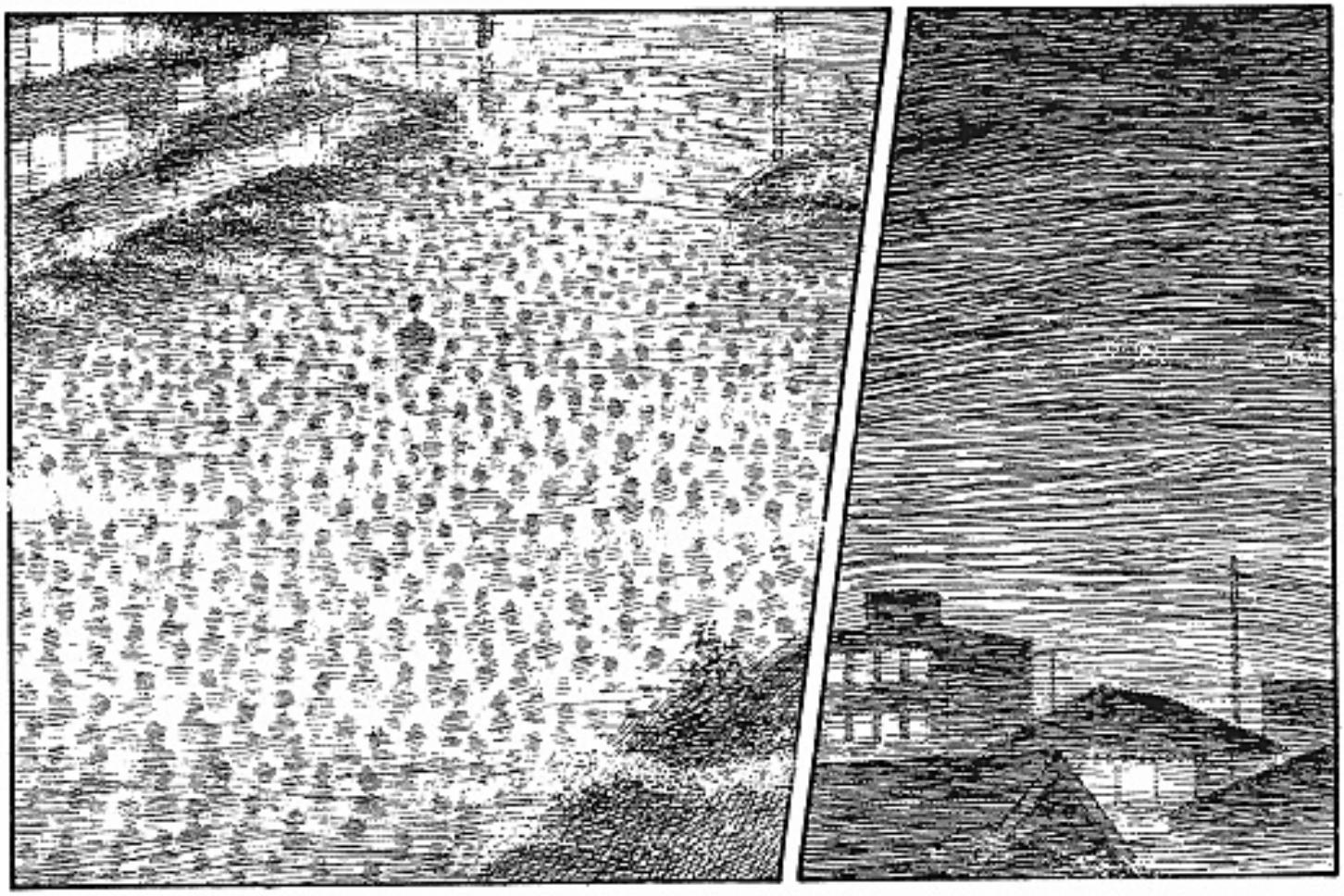
... GHOSTS.
THEY'RE BASI-CALLY ALL...

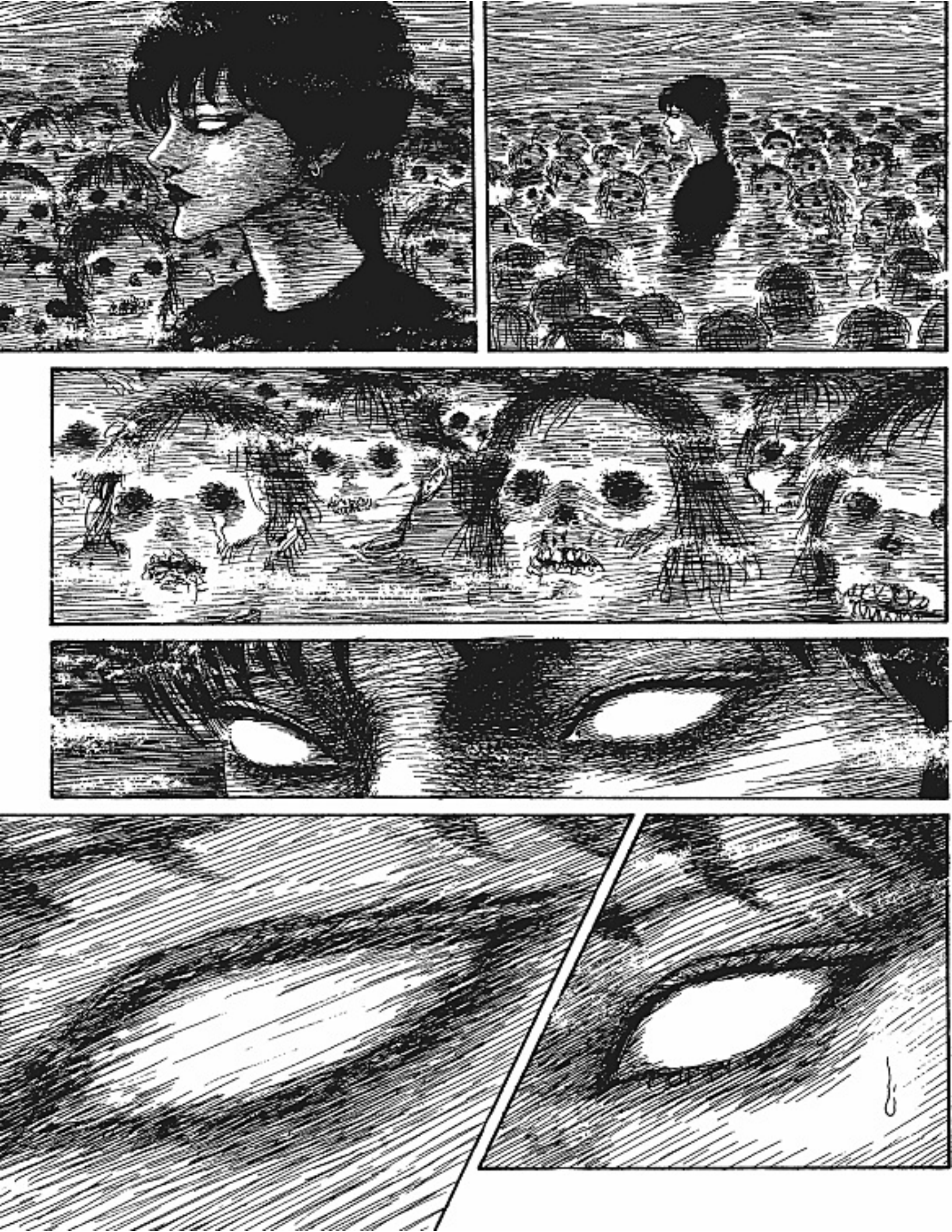
I'M NOT SO SURE...
WILL WE BE ABLE TO PERSUADE THEM?
B- BUT ...
THERE ...
LOOK AT THAT.
OH!

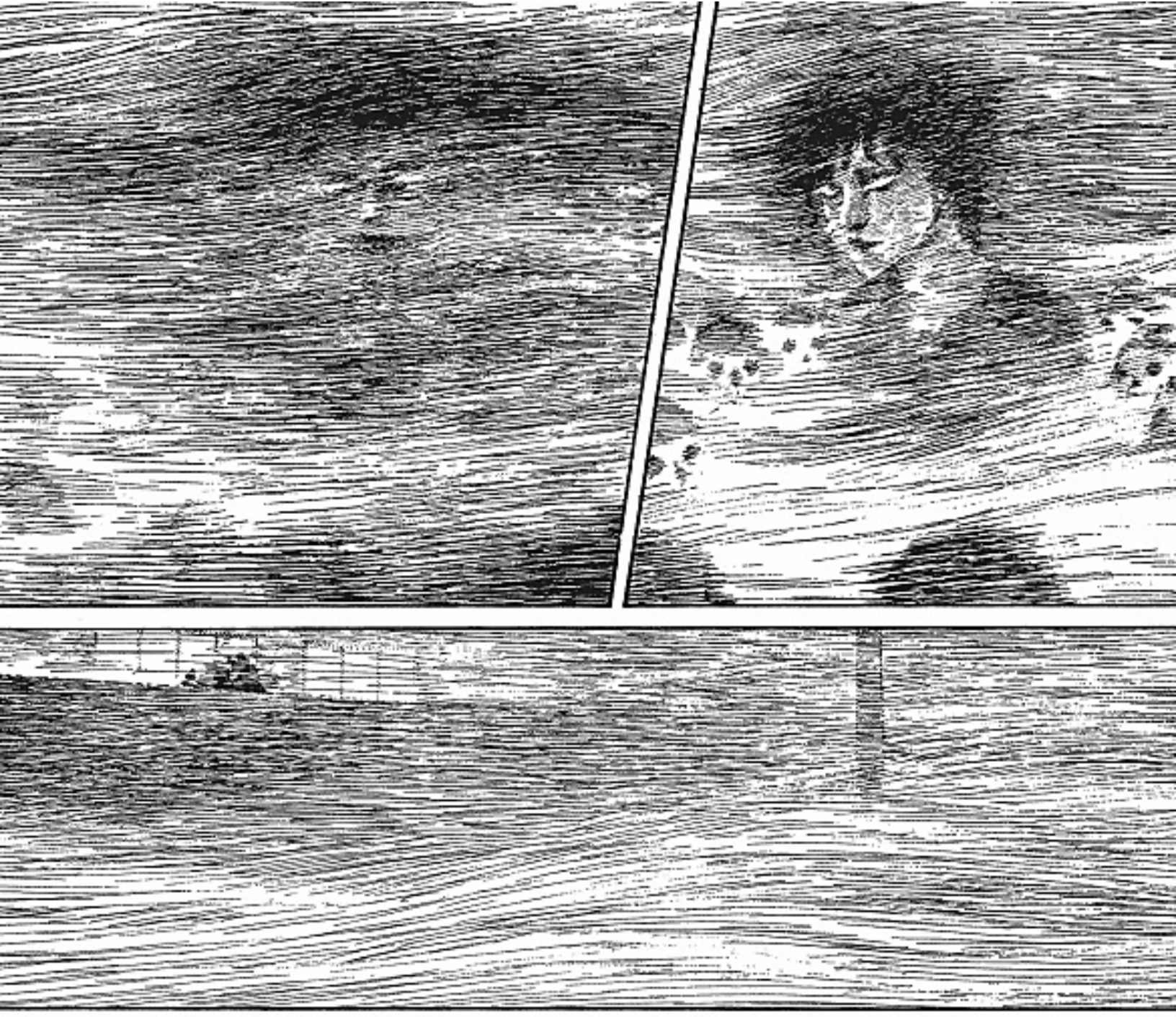
YOU'LL FIND LOVE.
YOU'LL FIND LOVE.
IF YOU LOVE HIM ...
...HE'LL LOVE YOU.
YOU'LL FIND LOVE.


GIVE HIM YOUR LOVE.
LOVE HIM...

LOVE HIM.







THREE DAYS LATER... MY PATROLS ENDED.
THE TOWN WAS AS SHROUDED IN FOG AS EVER, BUT IT WAS QUIET. I HEADED HOME WITH A FEELING OF PEACE.

THE STRANGE HIKIZURI SIBLINGS
NARUMI'S BOYFRIEND

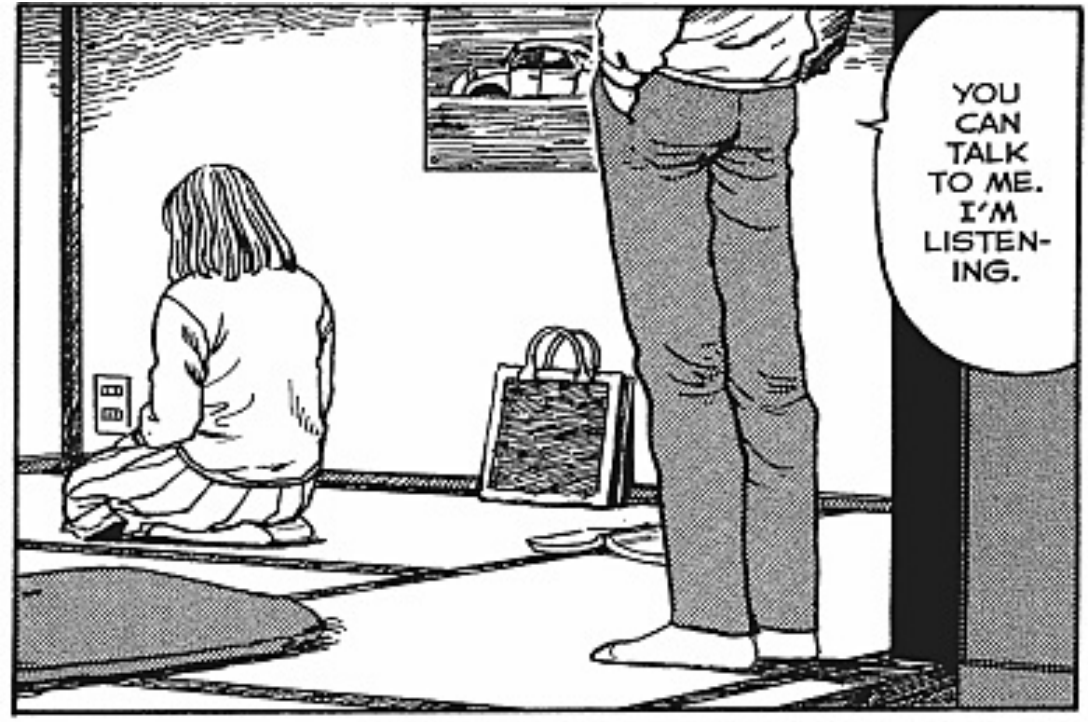
じじょのこいびと

次女の恋人

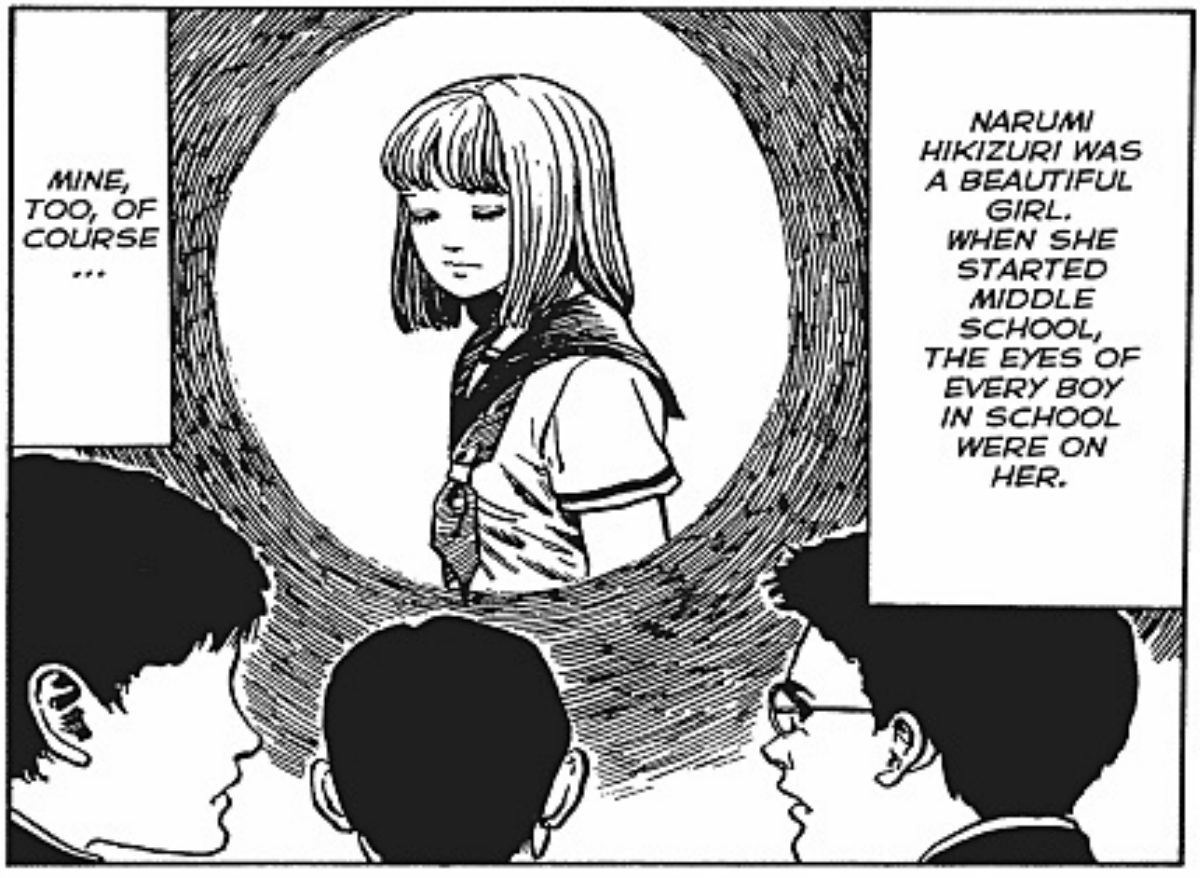
HELLO?
KOTANI, PHONE'S FOR YOU.
OH, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
IT ALL STARTED WITH A CALL THAT CAME TO THE BOARDING HOUSE.
RRRRRR-ZU
HOW ARE YOU?
O-OH, NARUMI... I REMEMBER YOU! IT'S BEEN AGES.
KOTANI? IT'S ME... DO YOU REMEMBER ME? IT'S NARUMI.
KLIK
I'M CALLING YOU FROM THE BRIDGE NEAR YOUR BOARDING HOUSE NOW.
KOTANI... GOODBYE. I'M GOING FAR, FAR AWAY. DON'T FORGET ME, OKAY?
YOU KNOW? I WAS IN SIXTH GRADE WHEN YOU WERE IN EIGHTH GRADE.

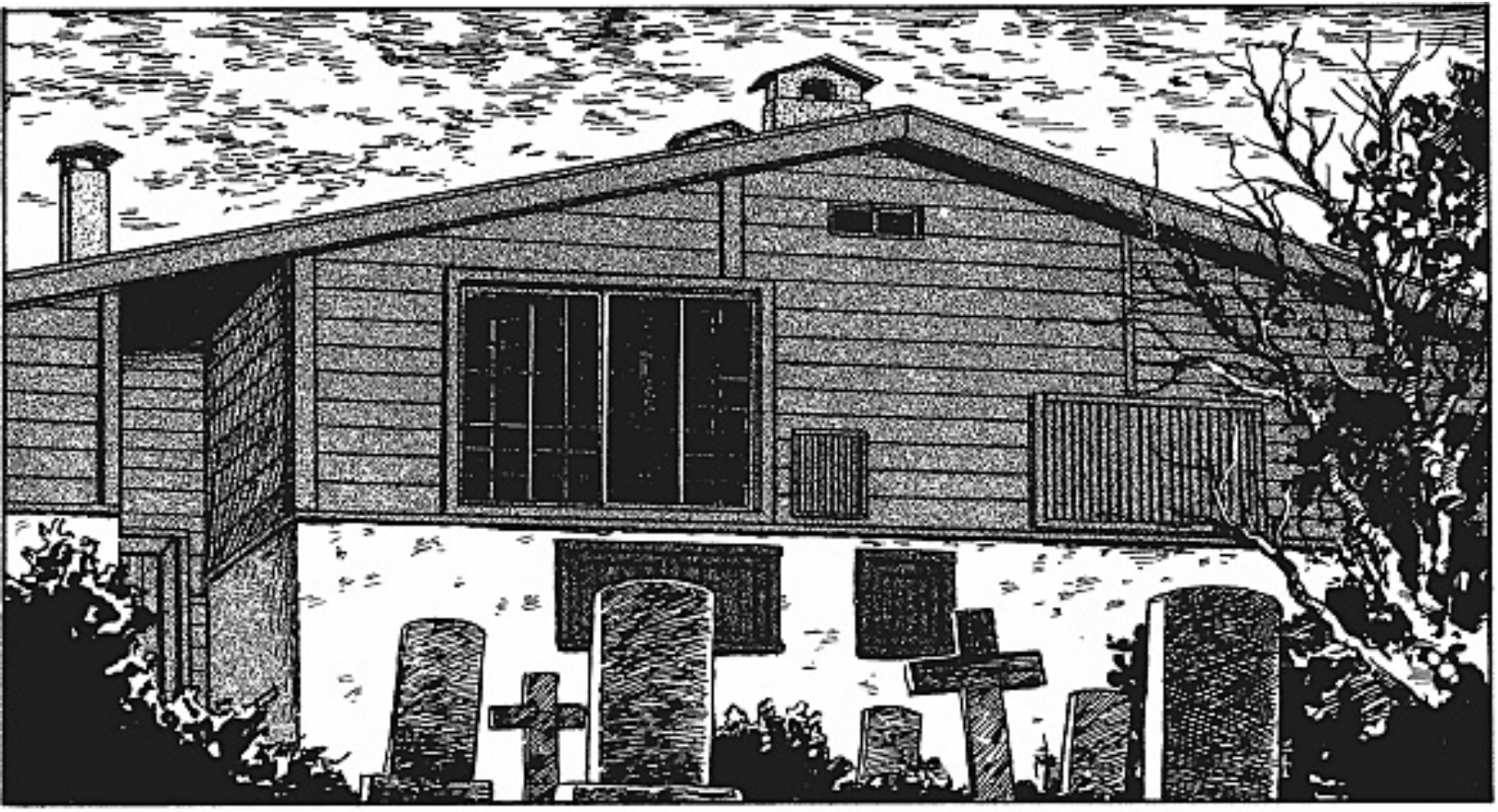
THE AFTERLIFE!
WHERE EXACTLY IS FAR, FAR AWAY...?!
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
A BRIDGE NEARBY... I THINK I KNOW WHICH ONE SHE MEANS.
SHE'S GOING TO KILL HERSELF!
I HAVE TO HURRY !!
TAK TAK
AH!
TAK

NARUMI!
LET ME DIE!
LET GO!
STOP! DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH!

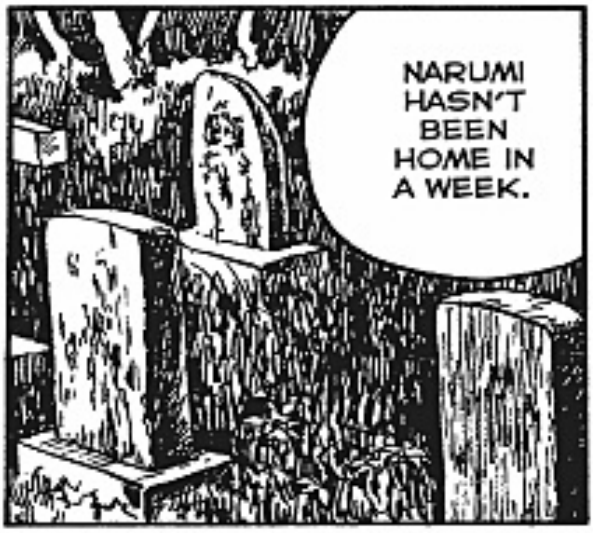


SHE SAID SHE STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL AROUND THE END OF LAST YEAR. AFTER HER PARENTS PASSED AWAY A FEW YEARS BEFORE, SHE LIVED WITH JUST HER FIVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS.



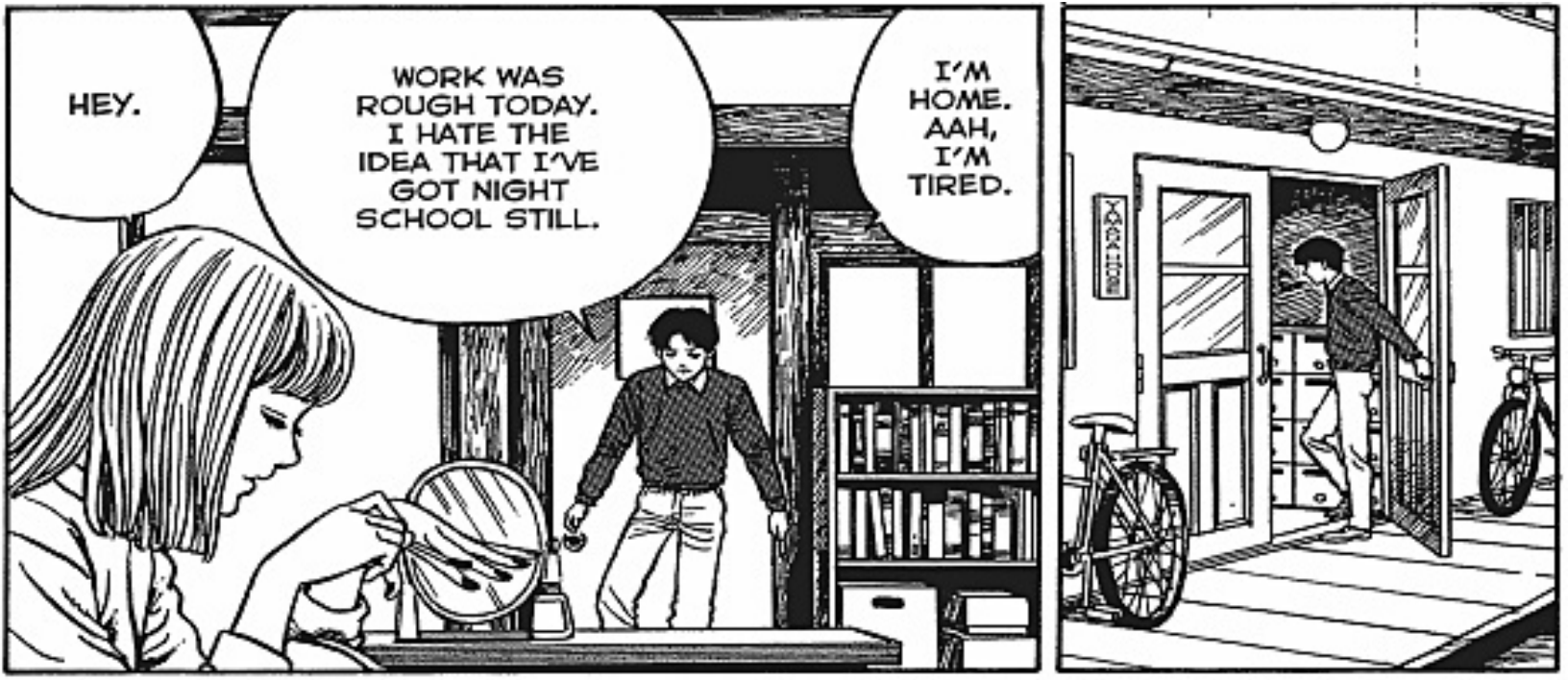


SHE WANTS TO MAKE PROBLEMS FOR HER BIG BROTHER HERE. ME, THE HEAD OF THIS FAMILY!
SHE'S ALWAYS GOING OFF ON HER OWN!

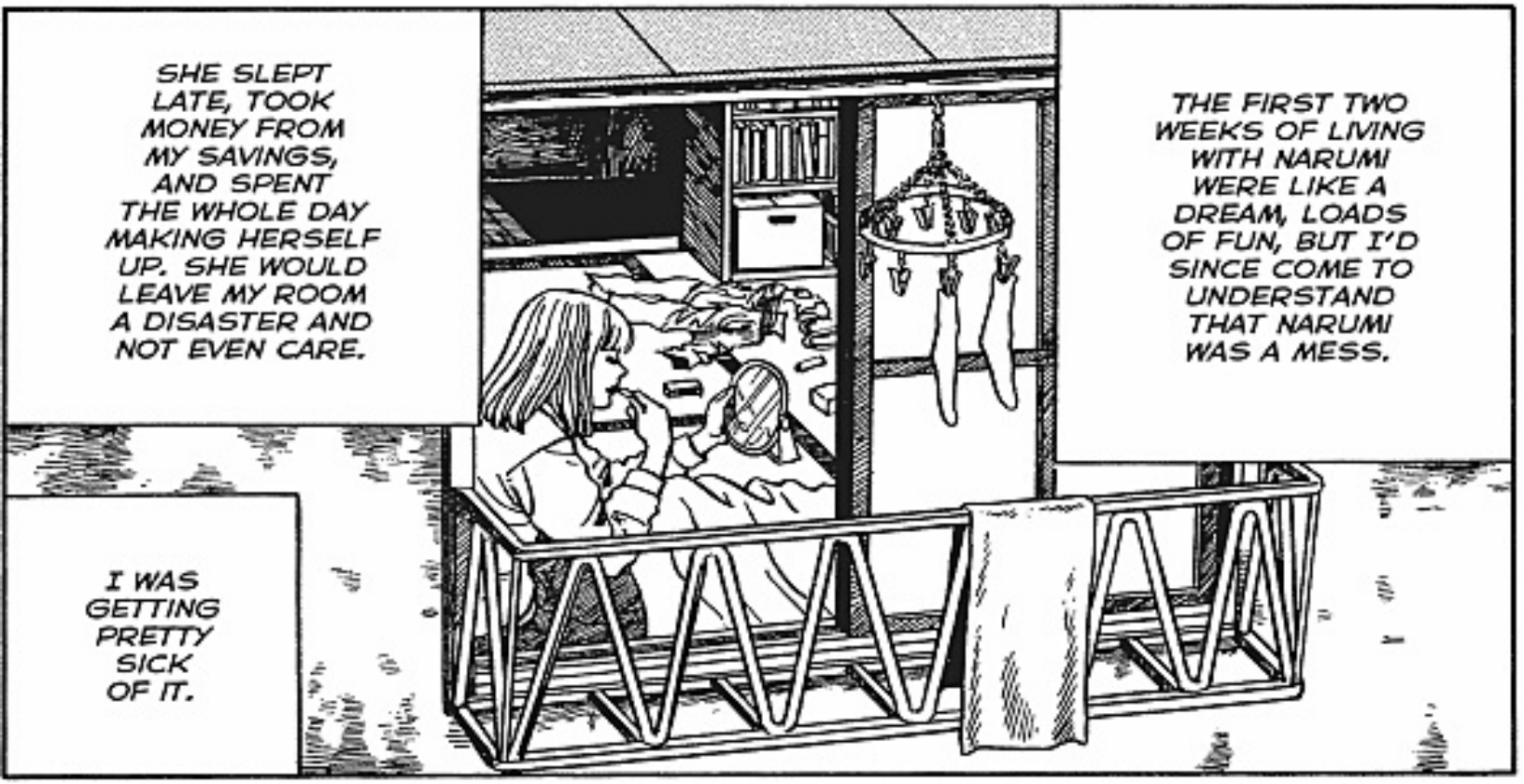

NARUMI HASN'T BEEN HOME IN A WEEK.

WHERE ON EARTH DID SHE GET TO?!
ONO HIKARI

SHE'S GOT SOME NERVE STAYING OUT WHEN SHE'S YOUNGER THAN ME.
EXACTLY. YOU'RE TOTALLY RIGHT, KAZUYA.
ELDEST DAUGHTER, KINAKO, 18.
ELDEST SON, KAZUYA HIKIZURI, 19.
I NEED TO REALLY LET HER HAVE IT.
KEE KEE KEE ...
THIRD SON, HITOSHI, 10.
U-UH-HUH. IT'S BAD.
THIRD DAUGHTER, MISAKO, 8.
I THINK IT'S NOT OKAY FOR A MERE GIRL LIKE HER TO STAY OUT... YOU THINK SO TOO, RIGHT, HITOSHI? MISAKO?
SECOND SON, SHIGORO, 16.
YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT.
WE HAVE TO FIND NARUMI AND BRING HER HOME RIGHT AWAY!
AT ANY RATE!


HEY.
WORK WAS ROUGH TODAY. I HATE THE IDEA THAT I'VE GOT NIGHT SCHOOL STILL.
I'M HOME. AAH, I'M TIRED.

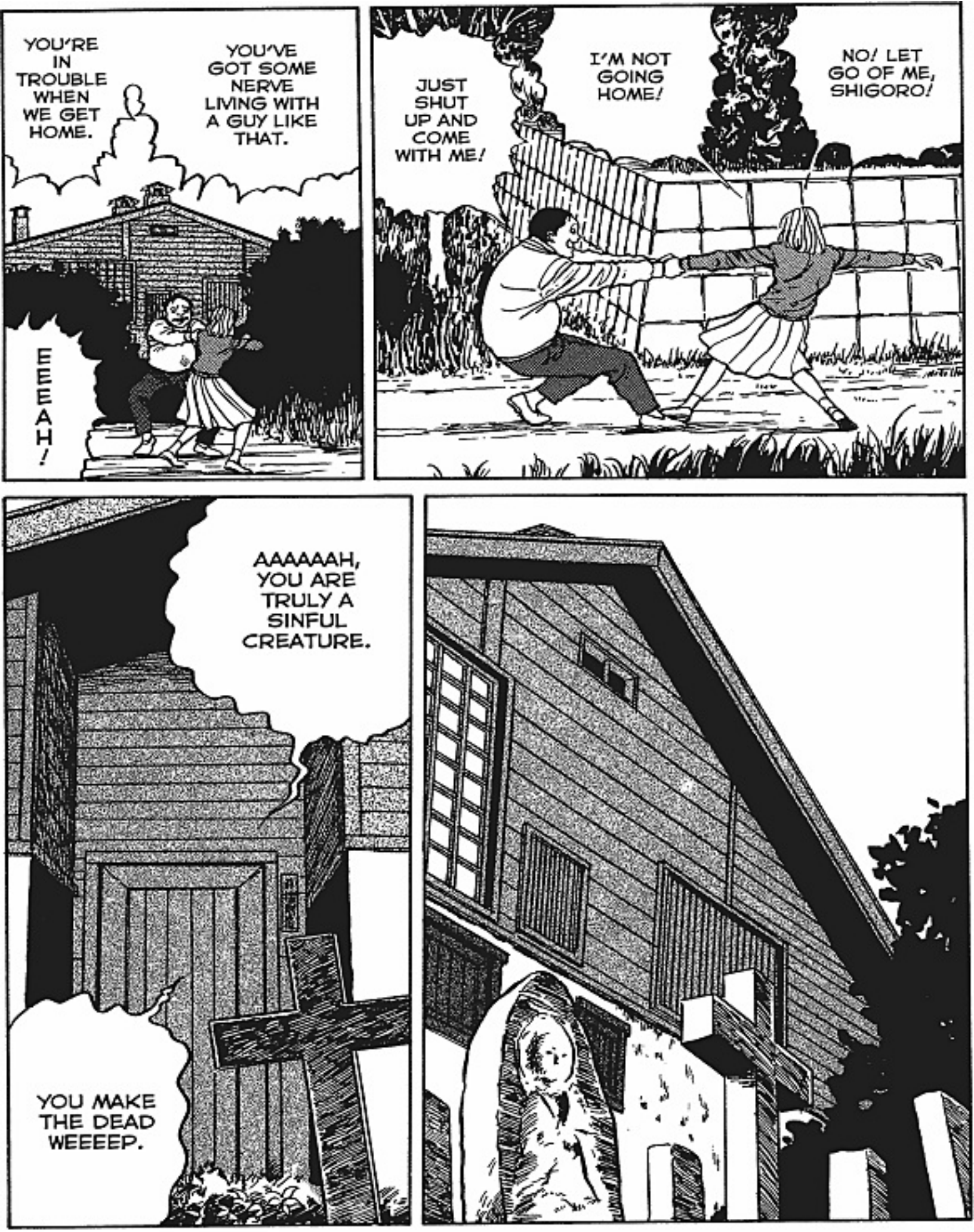
NARUMI, WHERE'D THAT NAIL POLISH COME FROM?
DID YOU USE MY SAVINGS AGAIN?


SHE SLEPT LATE, TOOK MONEY FROM MY SAVINGS, AND SPENT THE WHOLE DAY MAKING HERSELF UP. SHE WOULD LEAVE MY ROOM A DISASTER AND NOT EVEN CARE.
THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF LIVING WITH NARUMI WERE LIKE A DREAM, LOADS OF FUN, BUT I'D SINCE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT NARUMI WAS A MESS.
I WAS GETTING PRETTY SICK OF IT.

AND I'M SURE YOUR SIBLINGS ARE WORRIED. C'MON... PLEASE. JUST LEAVE.
I HAVE TO SUPPORT MYSELF AND GO TO SCHOOL. I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF YOU, TOO.
NARUMI... I WANT TO TALK TO YOU. SHOULDN'T YOU GO HOME ALREADY?
SOB SOB ...
SOB SOB ...
THEY'RE JEALOUS OF ME. ESPECIALLY MY SISTER KINAKO.
THERE'S NO WAY THOSE PEOPLE WOULD WORRY ABOUT ME.
I'LL DIE RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.
FINE. I'LL KILL MYSELF THEN.
YOU WANT ME TO GO BACK TO THAT HOUSE? YOU HATE ME. YOU HATE ME NOW, DON'T YOU?
NARUMI, THAT'S NOT IT...

NARUMI... FINE, I GET IT. I WON'T ASK YOU TO LEAVE.
THERE'S NO POINT IN LIVING IF YOU HATE ME. LET ME DIE.
LET GO! LET GO OF ME!
D-DON'T BE STUPID! WHAT'S SUICIDE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ?!
YOU REALLY WON'T?
REALLY ?!
I WAS FED UP.
BUT IF I TOLD HER TO GET OUT, SHE'D TRY TO KILL HERSELF AGAIN. SO LIFE WITH NARUMI DRAGGED ON.
I LIKE YOU. I DO. SO NO MORE TALK ABOUT DYING.
BUT YOU DO ACTUALLY HATE ME, DON'T YOU?

LA LA!
DEE !
DOO DO DOO!
LA LA!
IT'S SO NICE OUT.
LIVING THE EASY LIFE OVER THERE.
I FINALLY FOUND YOU, NARUMI ...
...NARUMI WAS GONE.
ONE NIGHT, WHEN I CAME HOME FROM NIGHT SCHOOL...


YOU'RE IN TROUBLE WHEN WE GET HOME.
YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE LIVING WITH A GUY LIKE THAT.
EEEAH!
JUST SHUT UP AND COME WITH ME!
I'M NOT GOING HOME!
NO! LET GO OF ME, SHIGORO!
AAAAAAH, YOU ARE TRULY A SINFUL CREATURE.
YOU MAKE THE DEAD WEEEEP.

I CAN HEAAAR THEM. THEIR SOBS ECHO ACROSS THE DESOLATE PLAAAINS.
MA AND PA ARE CRYING THEIR EYES OUT IN THE LAND OF THE DEAAAD.
THEY LAMENT YOUR FAITH-LESSNESS, NARUMI.
KEE KEE KEE!
Y-YEAH... YOU'RE RIGHT.
YOU THINK SO TOO, RIGHT, HITOSHI? MISAKO?
HONESTLY. I THINK IT'S FREAKY THAT YOU WOULDA KEPT LIVING WITH THAT GUY FOREVER IF I HADN'T COME FOUND YOU.

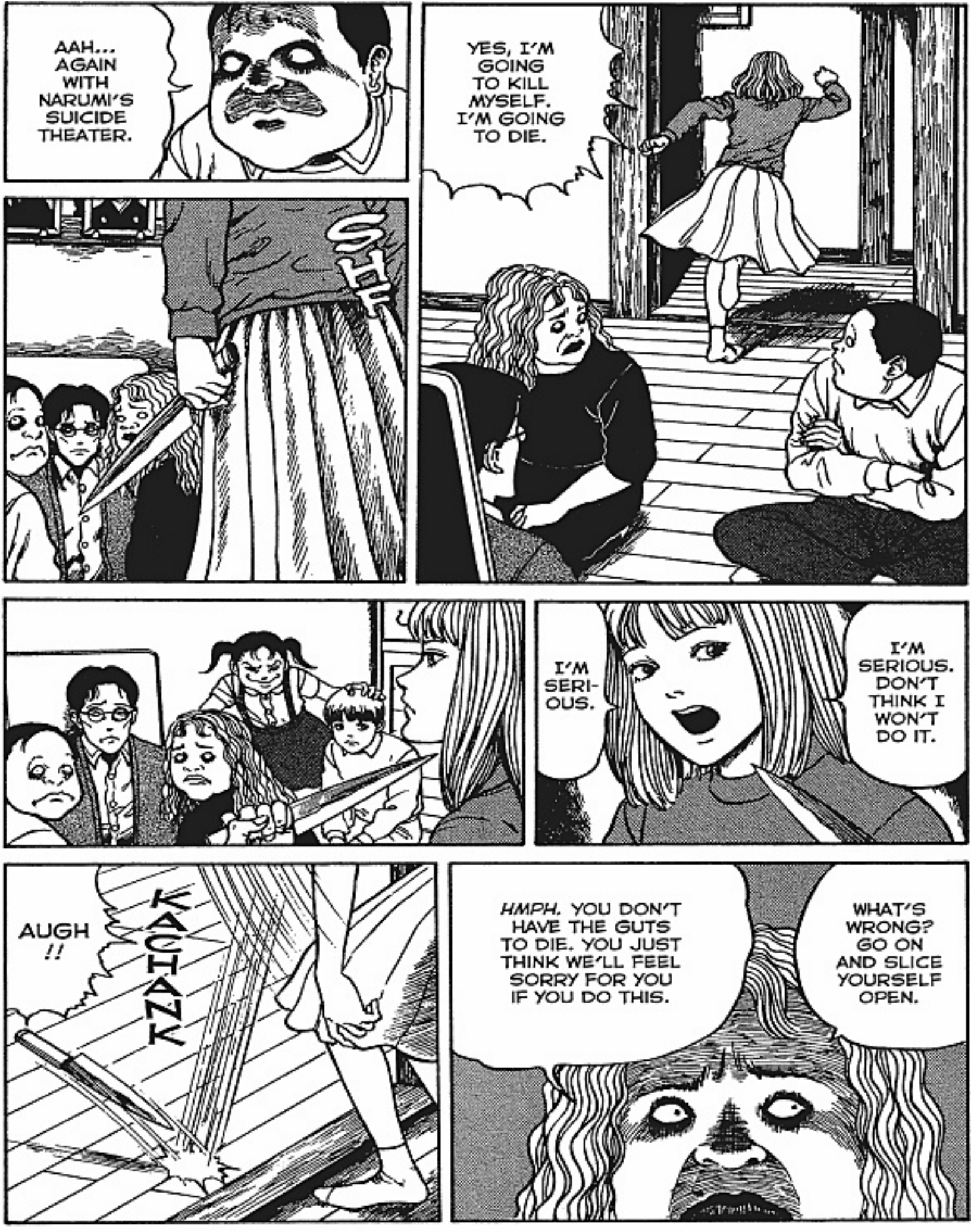
THUD
KEE KEE KEE!
GLARE
GOOD-NESS... HITOSHI, YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE NOW, TOO?
HEH HEH HEH.
UH...
BOING
LITTLE KIDS SHOULD STAY OUT OF THIS!
SHUT UP!
NARUMI LIKES BOYS! NARUMI LIKES BOYS! KEE KEE KEE!
NARUMI... BUT YOU'RE STILL JUST A CHILD.
KEE KEE KEE! YOU LIKE BOYS! YOU LIKE BOYS!

THERE'S A LITTLE THING CALLED SOCIETY!
YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
UNBELIEVABLE!
HOW DARE YOU MOVE IN WITH A BOY WHEN YOU'RE ONLY 14?
W-WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
HOW ABOUT YOU MOVE IN WITH SOMEONE TOO? THAT IS, IF YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE WHO WANTS YOU TO.
HMPH. YOU SAY THAT, KINAKO, BUT YOU'RE JUST MAD THAT YOUR BABY SISTER GOT THERE FIRST.
THE ISSUE IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT NARUMI'S RELATION-SHIP WITH THIS BOY.
THIS IS NO TIME FOR BICKERING.
KINAKO! CALM DOWN.
NARUMI! YOU—!

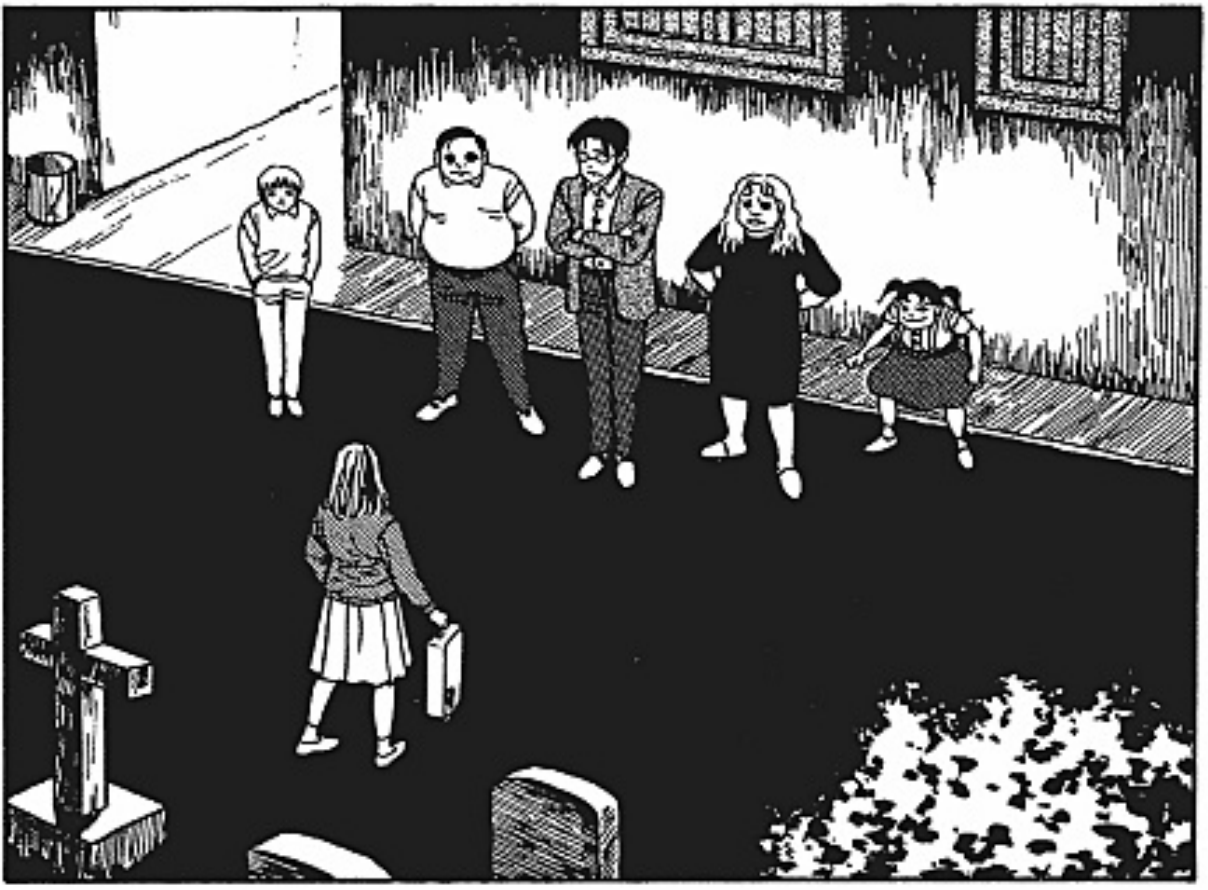
DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY GOOD IDEAS?
WE HAVE TO PUNISH HIM.
WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS BOY WHO LURED NARUMI AWAY FROM US?
OR RATHER, WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS BOY?
HOW ABOUT WE DRAG HIM ALONG BEHIND A HORSE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT RIPPING HIS HEAD FROM HIS BODY?
THAT'S AN OPTION. BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO TALK HORSES, THEN AT LEAST SUGGEST WE USE TWO TO PULL HIM APART.
AND WHERE WOULD WE GET A HORSE ANYWAY? THINK REALISTI-CALLY.

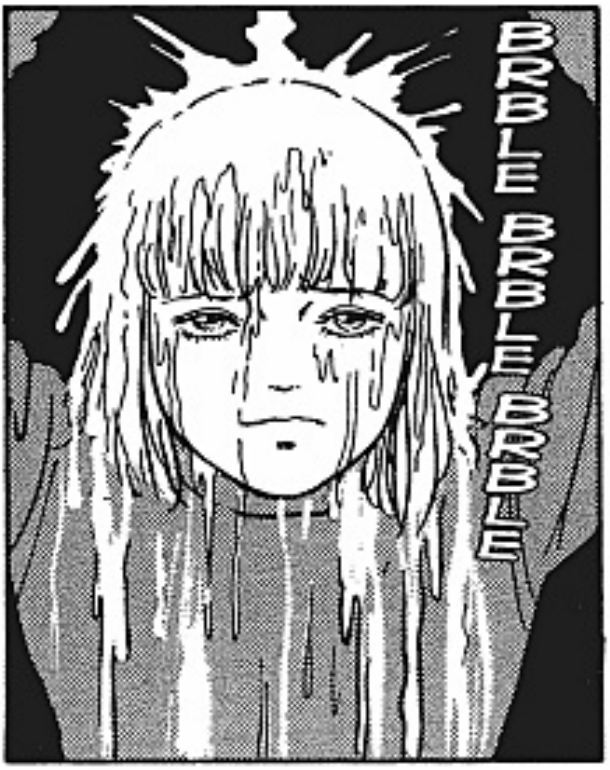
WE SHOULD BE MORE MERCIFUL, MAGNANI-MOUS.
WE *ARE* THE DESCENDANTS OF THE PROUD HIKIZURI HOUSE.
BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THAT, I'D WANT TO CUT OFF HIS LIMBS, TOO.
THAT'S RELATIVELY REALISTIC.
GIVE US SOME MORE OF THOSE IDEAS.
HA HA HA! SHARP AS ALWAYS, MISAKO.
I KNOW! I KNOW! WE HANG HIM FROM THE CEILING, SKEWER HIM AND KILL HIM.
YEAH, YEAH. YOU'RE BEING UNCOOPERATIVE.
HEY, HITOSHI! SAY SOMETHING. YOU NOT PLANNING TO HELP?
OKAY, OKAY. WE SUBMERGE HIM IN WATER—MAKE HIM SUFFER AND DIE.
KEE KEE KEE!

HOW ABOUT WE TELL THIS BOY HE CAN'T SEE NARUMI ANYMORE?
SO... SO, OKAY ...!
KEE KEE KEE!
WHAD
YEAH! YEAH!
...HITOSHI'S DEFINITELY THE BORING ONE.
...
I'M GOING TO KILL MYSELF.
I HATE ALL OF THIS ALREADY.
AAAAH, I HATE THIS.
...
DO IT.

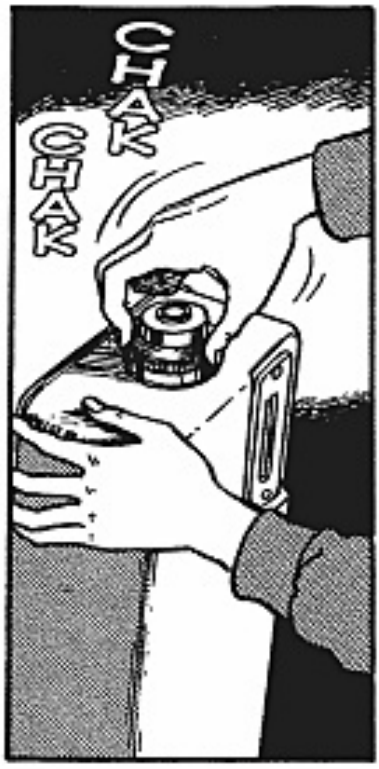

AAH... AGAIN WITH NARUMI'S SUICIDE THEATER.
YES, I'M GOING TO KILL MYSELF. I'M GOING TO DIE.
SHF
I'M SERI-OUS.
I'M SERIOUS. DON'T THINK I WON'T DO IT.
AUGH !!
KAUAZK
HMPH. YOU DON'T HAVE THE GUTS TO DIE. YOU JUST THINK WE'LL FEEL SORRY FOR YOU IF YOU DO THIS.
WHAT'S WRONG? GO ON AND SLICE YOURSELF OPEN.

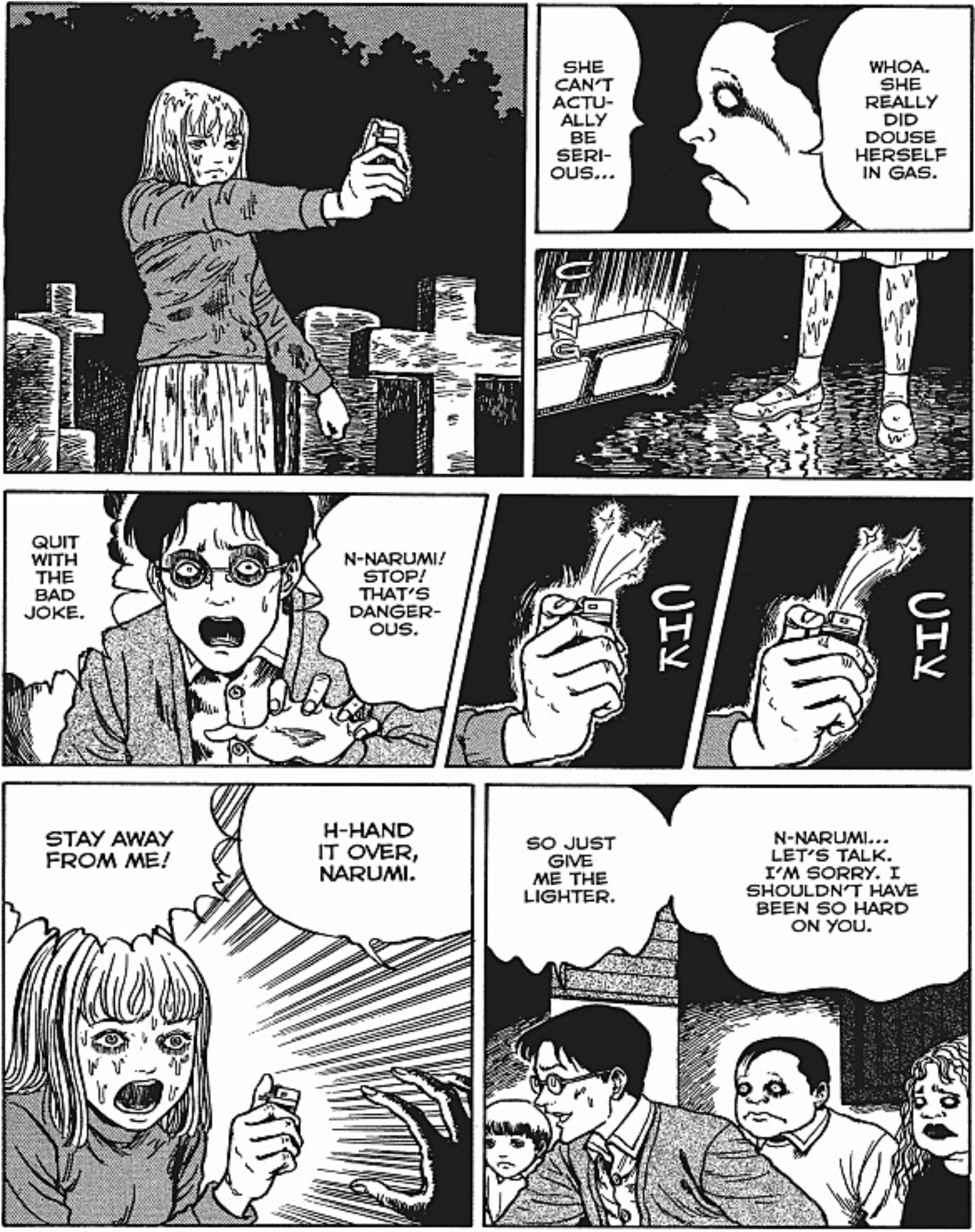
I'LL SET MYSELF ON FIRE. I'LL DOUSE MYSELF IN GAS AND SET MYSELF ON FIRE.
I KNOW. A WAY THAT'S CERTAIN TO KILL ME IS BETTER.




BRBLE BRBLE BRBLE

SPLSH


CHAK
CHAK

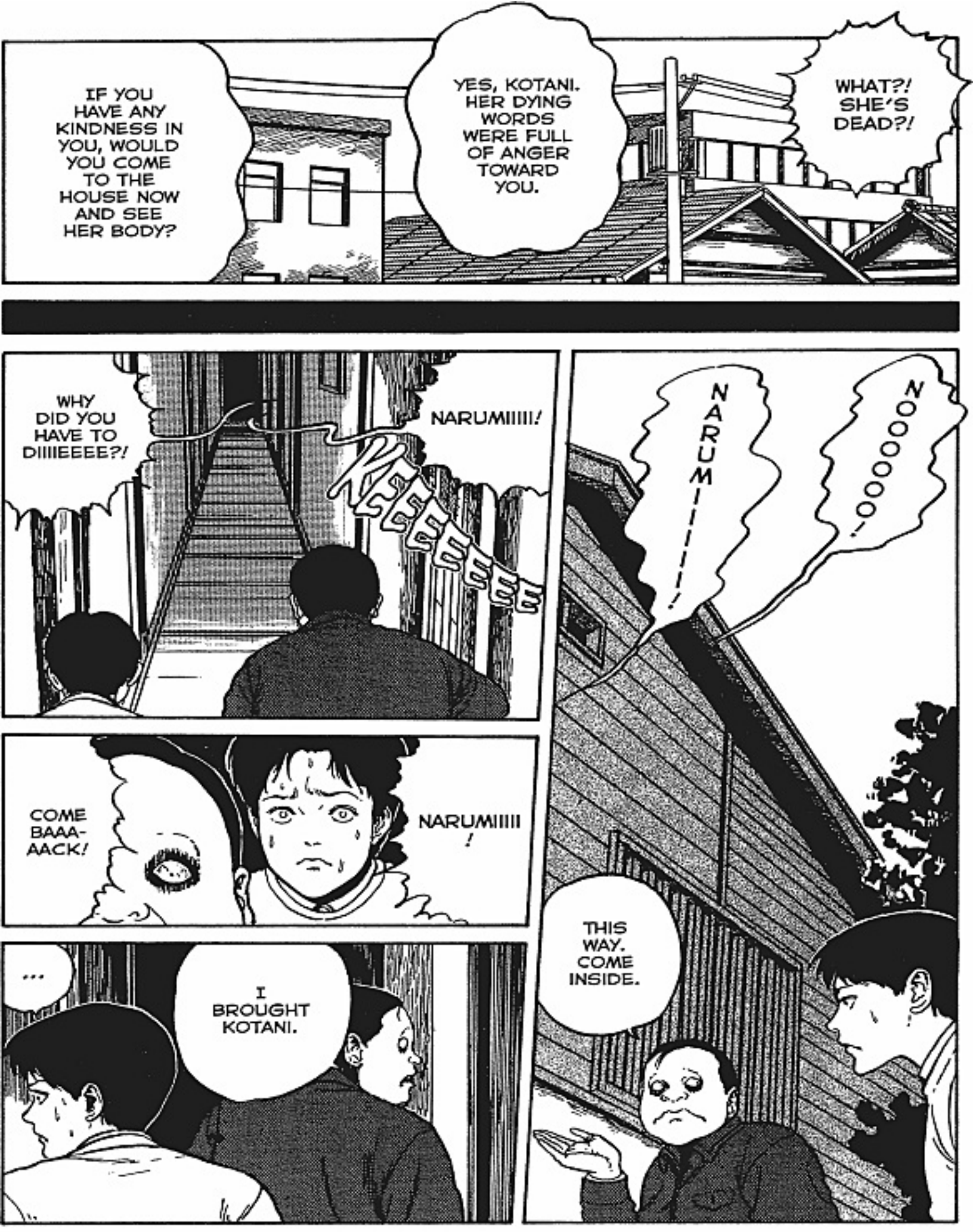

SHE CAN'T ACTU-ALLY BE SERI-OUS...
WHOA. SHE REALLY DID DOUSE HERSELF IN GAS.
CLANG
QUIT WITH THE BAD JOKE.
N-NARUMI! STOP! THAT'S DANGER-OUS.
CHK
CHK
STAY AWAY FROM ME!
H-HAND IT OVER, NARUMI.
SO JUST GIVE ME THE LIGHTER.
N-NARUMI... LET'S TALK. I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO HARD ON YOU.

FWOOOSH
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

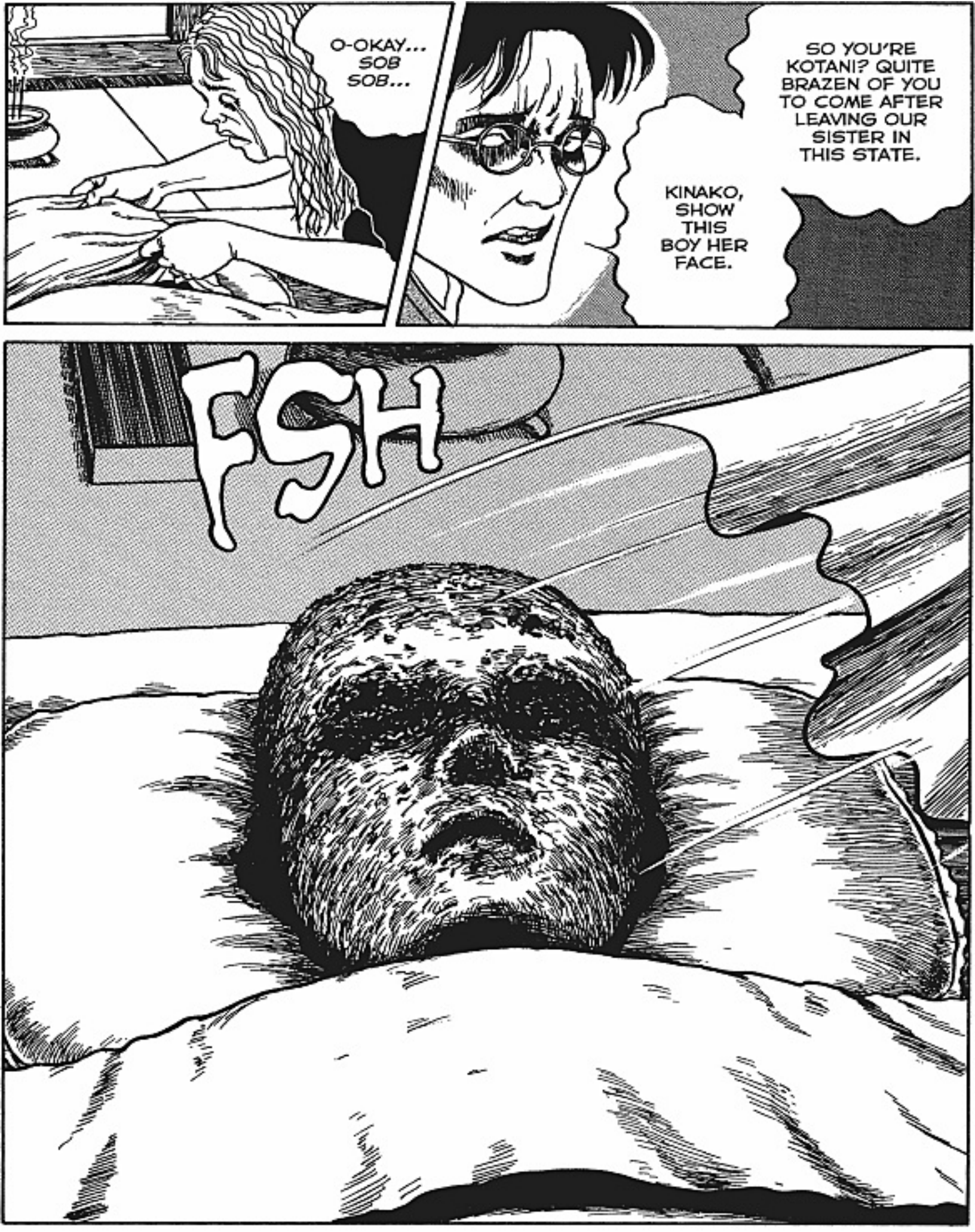
THAT'S NARUMI ...
Y-YES, IT'S NARUMI...
NARUMI'S ON FIRE RIGHT NOW, RIGHT?
KAZUYA... THAT'S NARUMI, RIGHT?
BURN TO ASHES. HA HA HA HA!
SHI-GORO!
HA HA HA... BURN, BURN...
HA HA...
HA...
NARUMI'S ON FIRE!
HA HA HA HA! SHE'S BURNING! SHE'S ON FIRE!

IT HAD BEEN TWO DAYS SINCE NARUMI DIS-APPEARED.
KOTANI
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN RELIEVED SHE WAS GONE.
SO WHY DID I FEEL SO EMPTY?
KNOCK KNOCK
KNOCK KNOCK
MAYBE IT'S HER?
COMING!
IS THAT YOU, NARUMI? DID YOU COME BACK?
KACHAK
OH!

WELL, I DON'T REALLY STAND OUT, SO MAYBE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE ME. BUT I REMEMBER YOU VERY WELL.
I GUESS YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME. I WAS IN YOUR CLASS. IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
YOU'RE KOTANI, RIGHT?
I AM. AND YOU ARE?
BUT I BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW SHE HAD A BROTHER WITH SUCH AN OLD-LOOKING FACE.
BECAUSE I KNOW YOU WERE PRETTY FRIENDLY WITH MY LITTLE SISTER. SHE WAS POPULAR WITH GUYS, BUT YOU APPEAR TO BE THE LUCKY ONE WHO WON HER HEART.
NARUMI IS DEAD.
OH, I SEE. YOU'RE NARUMI'S BROTHER. UM. SHE WAS ACTUALLY HERE FOR A WHILE, BUT SHE LEFT.
DIDN'T SHE GO HOME?
AND I IMAGINE YOU NEVER GUESSED THAT THIS BROTHER WOULD INTRUDE ON YOUR LITTLE LOVE NEST?


IF YOU HAVE ANY KINDNESS IN YOU, WOULD YOU COME TO THE HOUSE NOW AND SEE HER BODY?
YES, KOTANI. HER DYING WORDS WERE FULL OF ANGER TOWARD YOU.
WHAT?! SHE'S DEAD?!
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DIIIIEEEE?!
NARUMIIIII!
KEEEEEE
NOOOOOO!
NARUMI!!!
COME BAAA-AACK!
NARUMIIIII!
THIS WAY. COME INSIDE.
...
I BROUGHT KOTANI.

NARUMIIII!
NARUMIIII!
GO ON INSIDE.
WAAAAAH!
WAAAAH!
UNNNH, NARUMIIIIII!

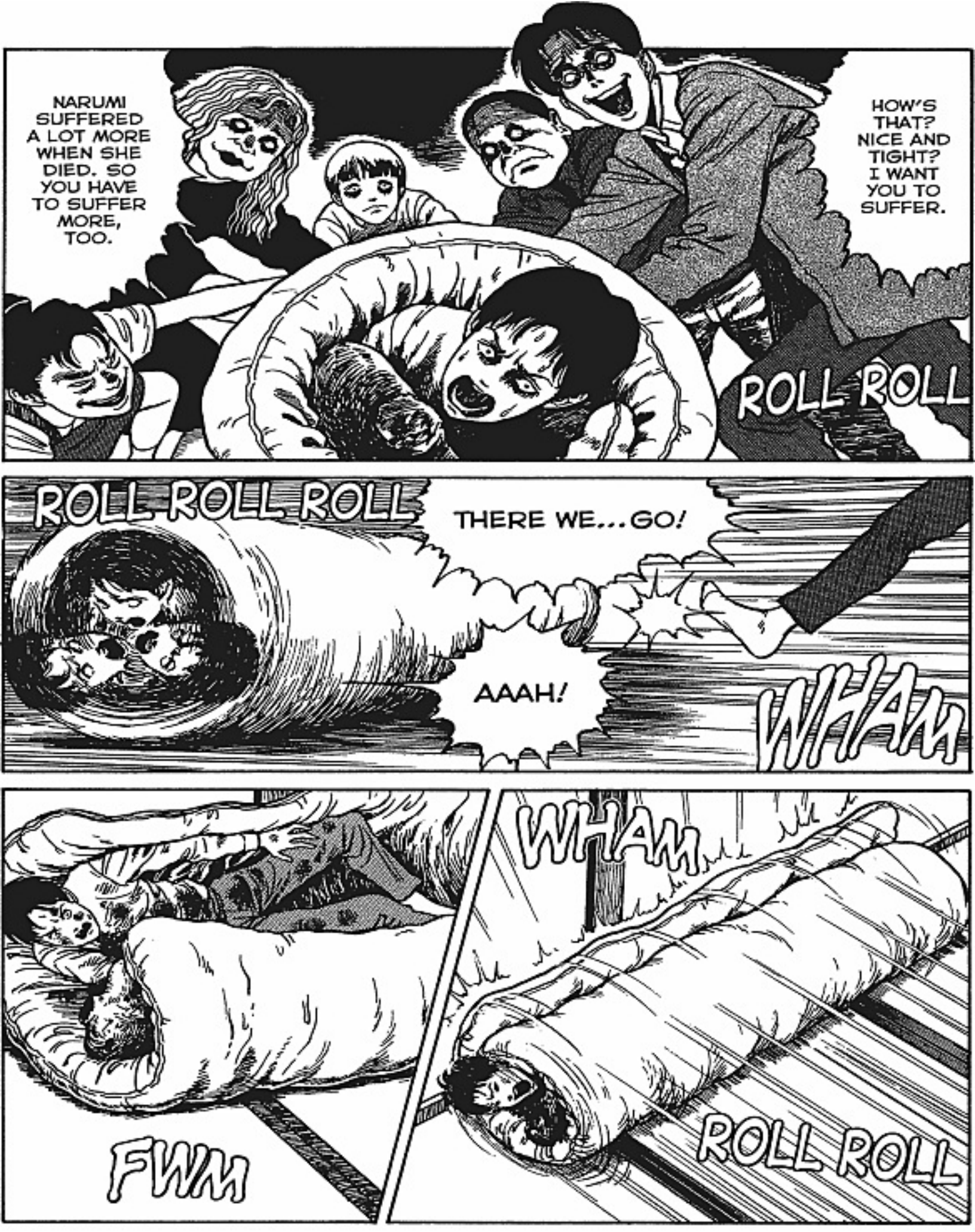

O-OKAY... SOB SOB...
SO YOU'RE KOTANI? QUITE BRAZEN OF YOU TO COME AFTER LEAVING OUR SISTER IN THIS STATE.
KINAKO, SHOW THIS BOY HER FACE.
FSH

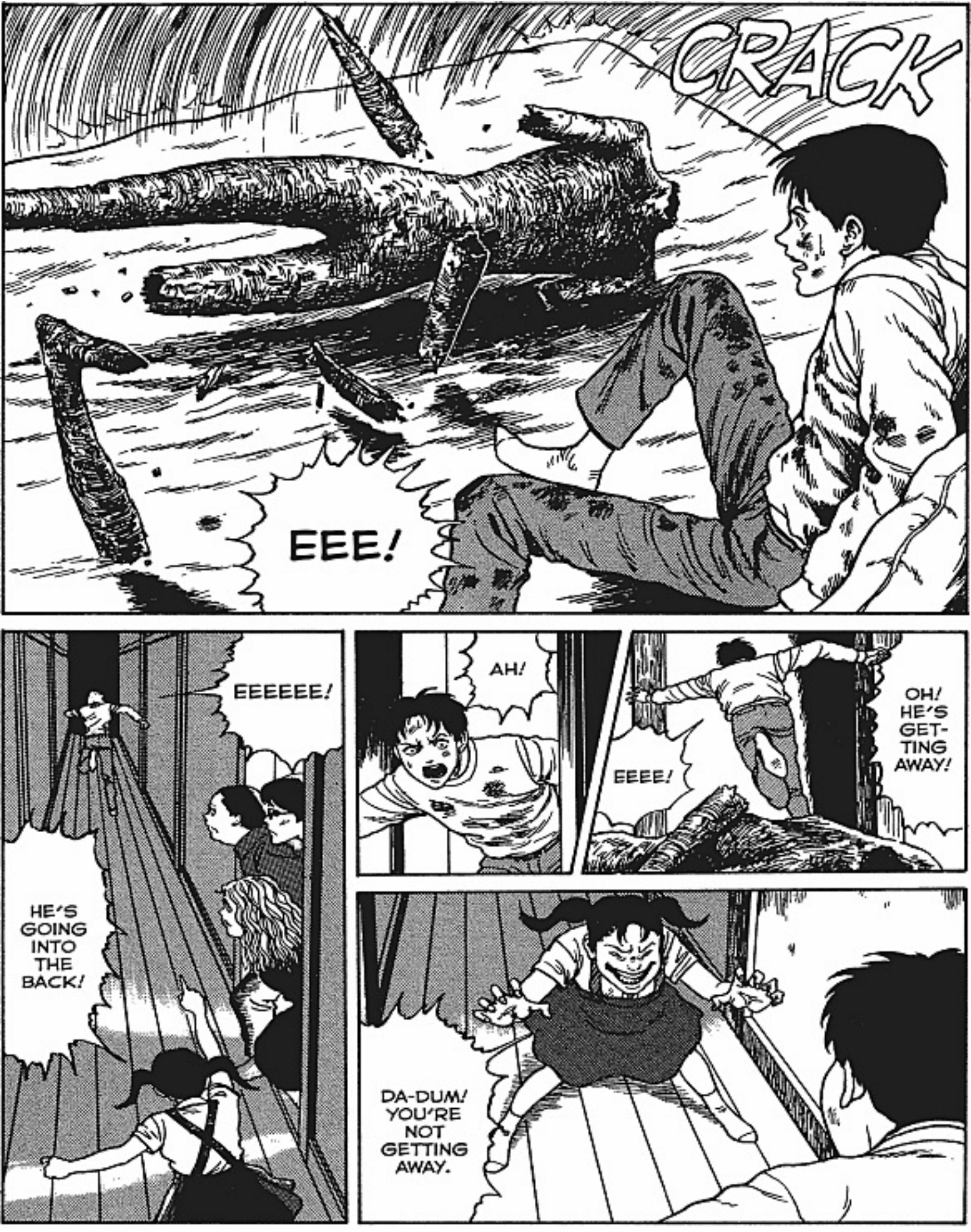
SHE SET HERSELF ON FIRE.
SLUMP
WHD
AAAH!
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?
...
W-WHAT *SHOULD* I DO ABOUT IT?
KOTANI. IT'S YOUR FAULT OUR SISTER IS DEAD. SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
I SAID, GET UNDER THIS FUTON AND STAY WITH HER!
HUH? W-WHAT?
IF YOU REALLY FEEL SORRY, THEN SPEND THE NIGHT WITH NARUMI.

AAAAH!
GO!
YANK
AH! PLEASE DON'T!
BE GOOD AND GET IN THERE!
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
EEE!
POP
TUBE TUBE TUBE
GO, GO!

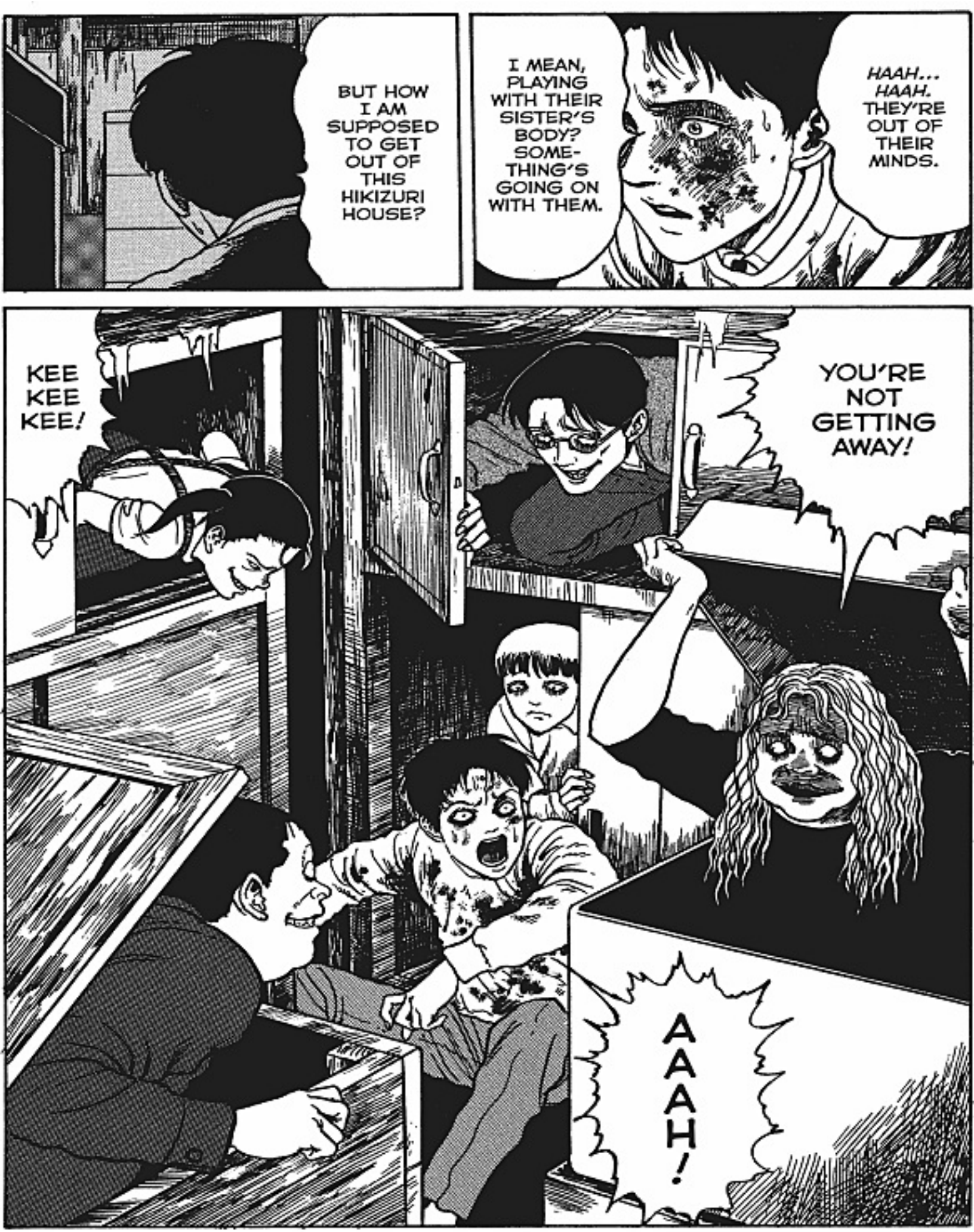
HITOSHI! PUT HER HEAD BACK ON THE PILLOW.
AAAH, HER HEAD CAME OFF. SHE BURNED SO COMPLETELY, SHE TURNED BRITTLE LIKE CHARCOAL.
AAAAA-AAAH!
NO... YOU'LL STAY LIKE THAT TONIGHT.
P-PLEASE. FORGIVE ME.
EEE!

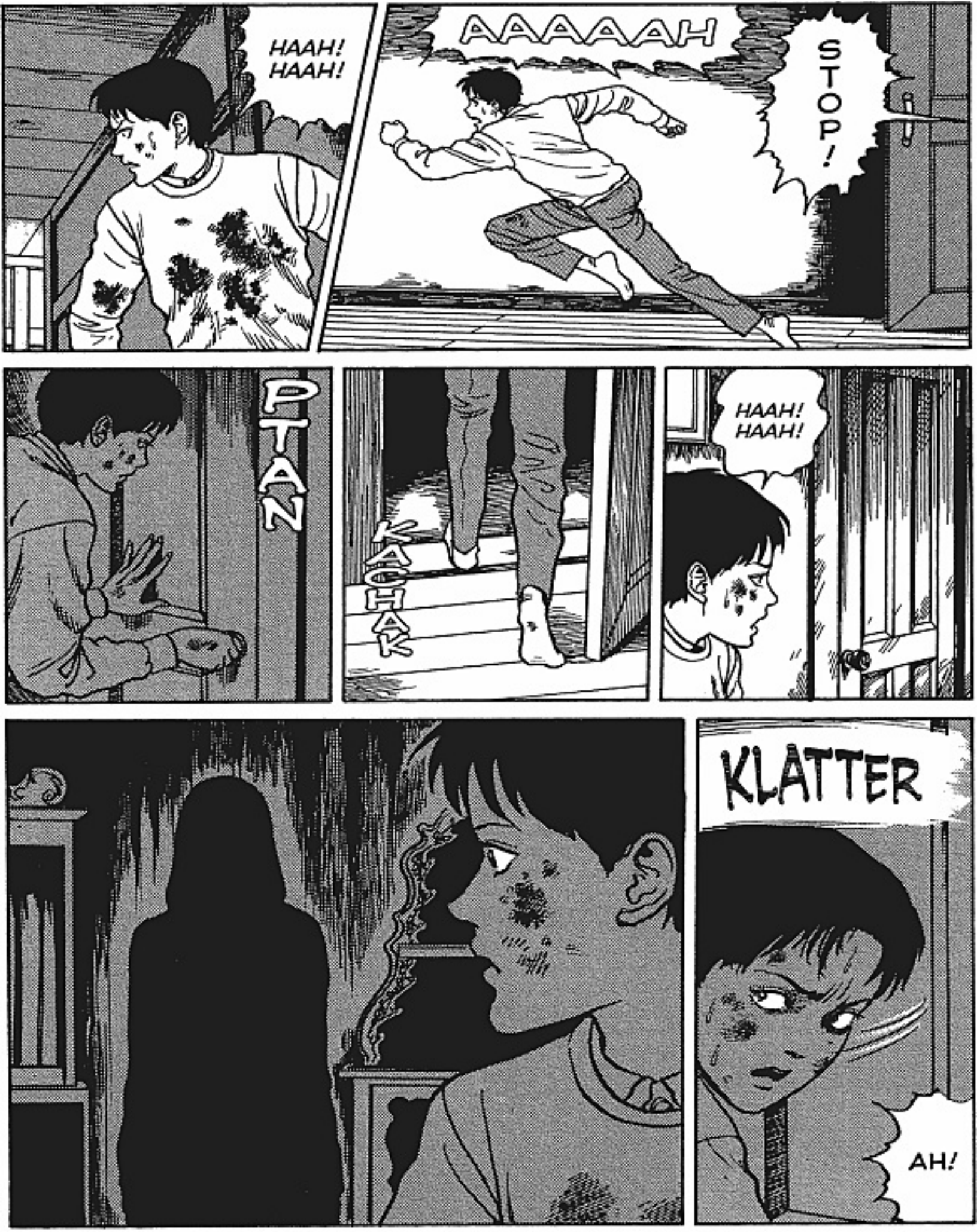
NGAAH!
KISS HEEER-RRRR!!
REVENGE FOR MY SISTER!
WHAP
REVENGE FOR MY SISTER!
WHAP
HEY! LET'S ROLL 'EM UP IN THE FUTON!
KEE KEE KEE!
ONE! TWO! ONE TWO!
AAAAH!
OH! GOOD IDEA!

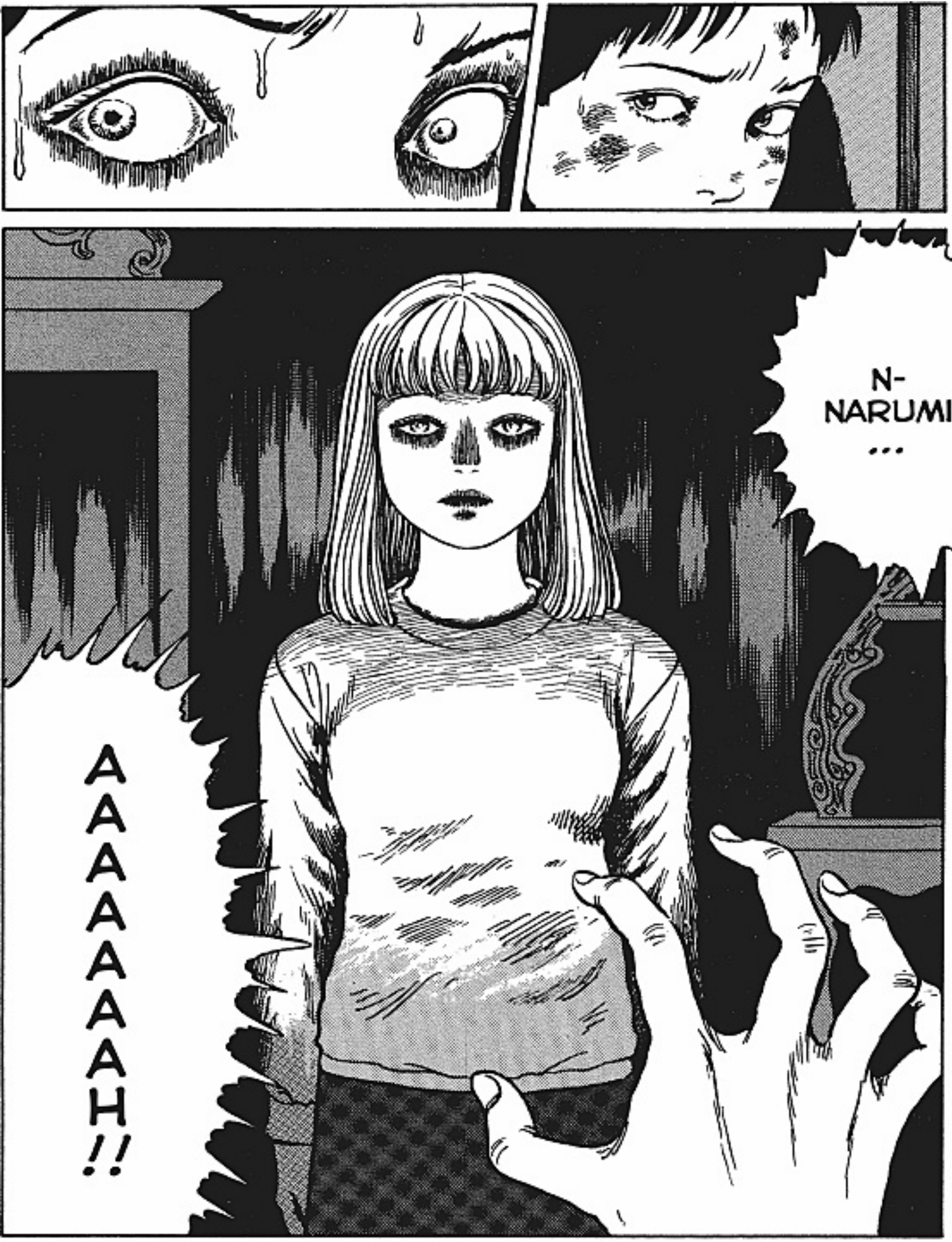

NARUMI SUFFERED A LOT MORE WHEN SHE DIED. SO YOU HAVE TO SUFFER MORE, TOO.
HOW'S THAT? NICE AND TIGHT? I WANT YOU TO SUFFER.
ROLL ROLL
ROLL ROLL ROLL
THERE WE...GO!
AAAH!
WHAM
FWM
WHAM
ROLL ROLL


CRACK
EEE!
EEEEEE!
HE'S GOING INTO THE BACK!
AH!
EEEE!
OH! HE'S GET-TING AWAY!
DA-DUM! YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY.

HAAH, HAAH.
HAAH.
HA HA HA HA! HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY FROM US!
FLY, LIKE MOTHS TO A FLAME!
HAAH.
HAAH.
I'M COVERED IN NARUMI SOOT.
EEE! SOOT FROM THE BODY.
THIS IS ABSURD. IT'S TOTALLY RIDICULOUS.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS.


BUT HOW I AM SUPPOSED TO GET OUT OF THIS HIKIZURI HOUSE?
I MEAN, PLAYING WITH THEIR SISTER'S BODY? SOME-THING'S GOING ON WITH THEM.
HAAH... HAAH. THEY'RE OUT OF THEIR MINDS.
KEE KEE KEE!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!
AAAH!

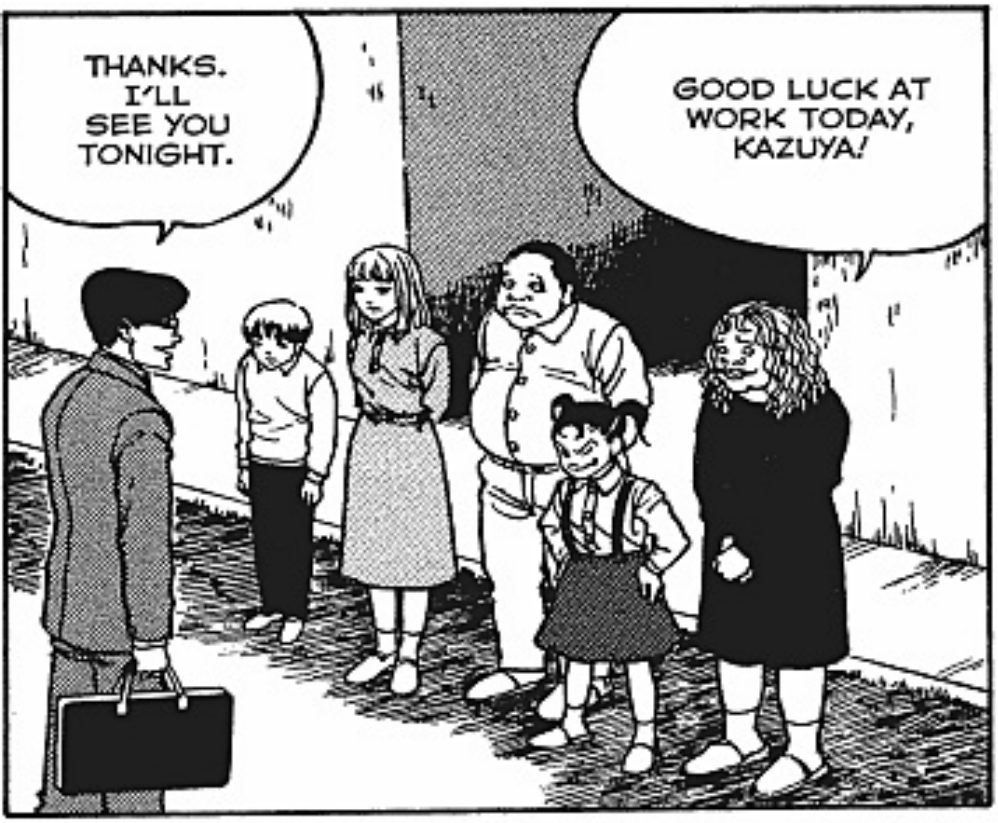

HAAH!
HAAH!
AAAAAAH
STOP!
PTAN
KACHAK
HAAH!
HAAH!
KLATTER
AH!

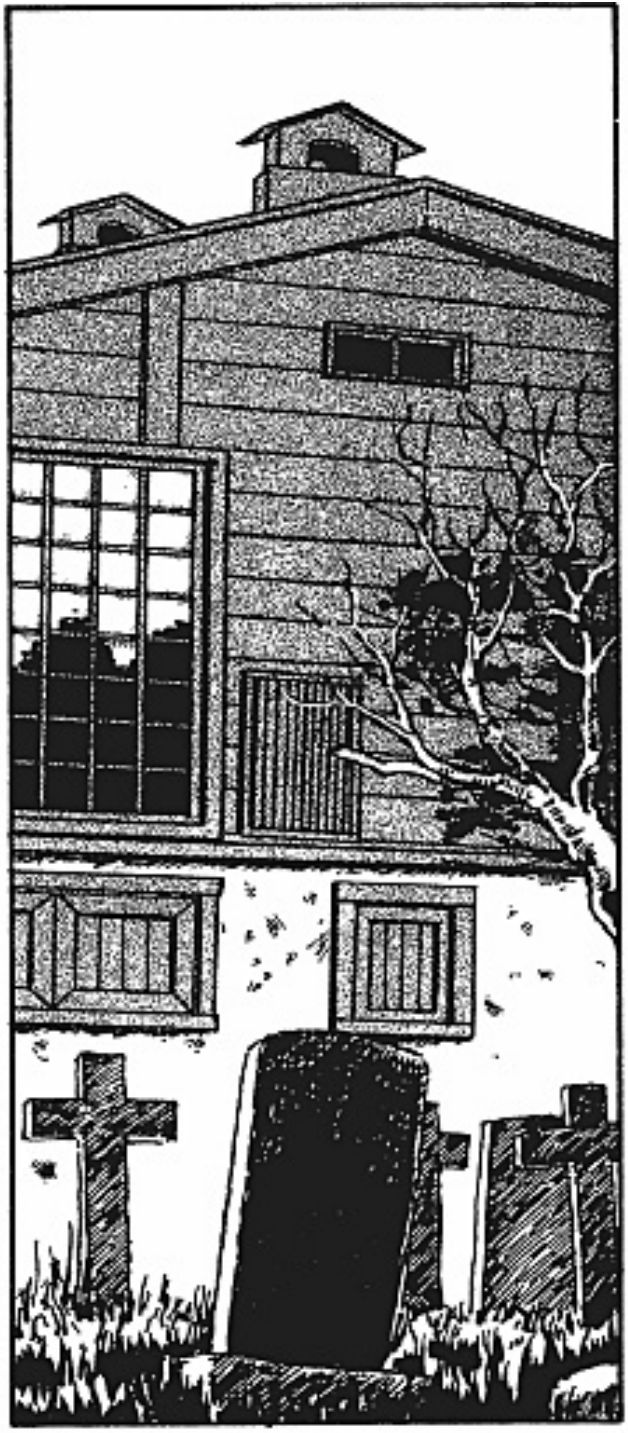

N-
NARUMI
...
AAAAAAAH!!

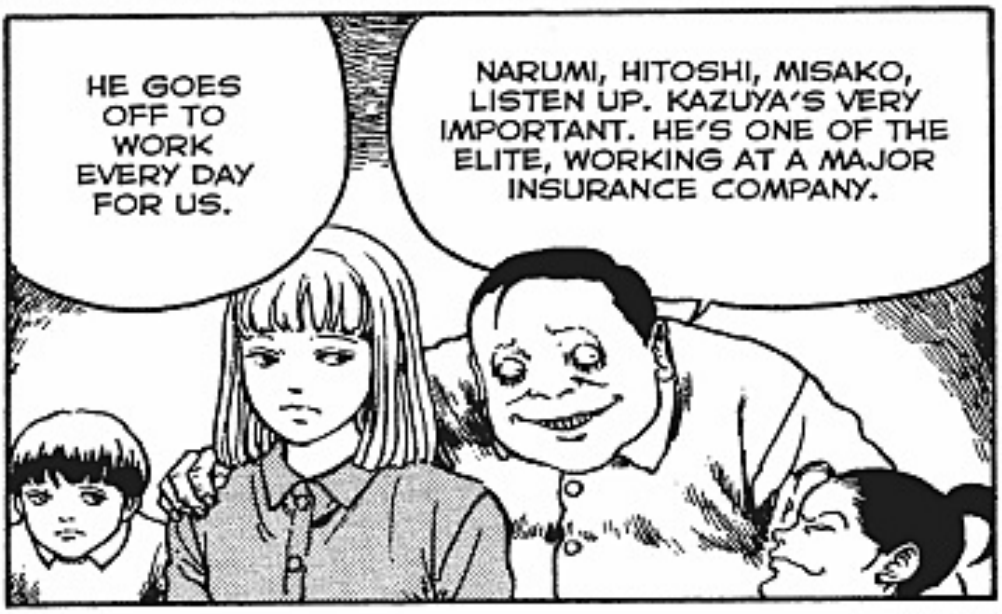
NARUMI! IT'S 'CAUSE YOU WERE STANDING THERE LIKE A GHOST! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT.
HEART ATTACK.
NO LUCK AT ALL! CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D GO AND DIE ON US.
THUMP
THUMP
KRZCH
KRZCH
I'M CALLING THE COPS!
WHAT?! YOU'RE MAKING THIS MY FAULT?! YOU'RE THE ONES WHO PLANNED THIS SICK JOKE!
HONESTLY. AND NOW YOU STAND THERE COOL AS A CUCUMBER, EVEN THOUGH YOU JUST KILLED YOUR LOVER, WELL, I'LL JUST SAY IT...
... YOU'RE A MONSTER.

KAZUYA! WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO WITH THIS BURNED-UP MANNEQUIN?
NOW, NARUMI, CALM DOWN! IT ENDED BADLY, BUT WE'RE FAMILY.
THE SIX OF US HAVE TO JOIN FORCES AND KEEP GOING, OKAY? NOTHING CAN BEAT THE BONDS OF BLOOD!
HMPH. I HAD ZERO INTENTION OF ACTUALLY DOING IT, THOUGH.
I WAS ACTUALLY SURPRISED WHEN YOU TRIED TO LIGHT THE LIGHTER THAT NIGHT, NARUMI.
RIGHT. I FORGOT ABOUT THAT... WE'LL BURY IT WITH KOTANI IN NARUMI'S PLACE. AT LEAST GIVE HIM SOME COMFORT.
HUH? WE'RE DIGGING HIM BACK UP? UGH.

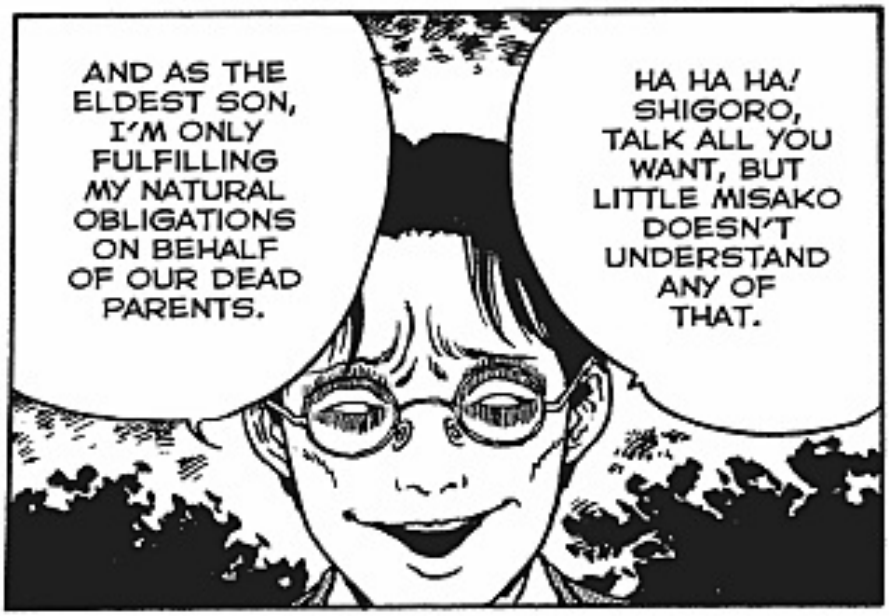
THE STRANGE HIKIZURI SIBLINGS
THE SEANCE
降霊会
こうれいかい

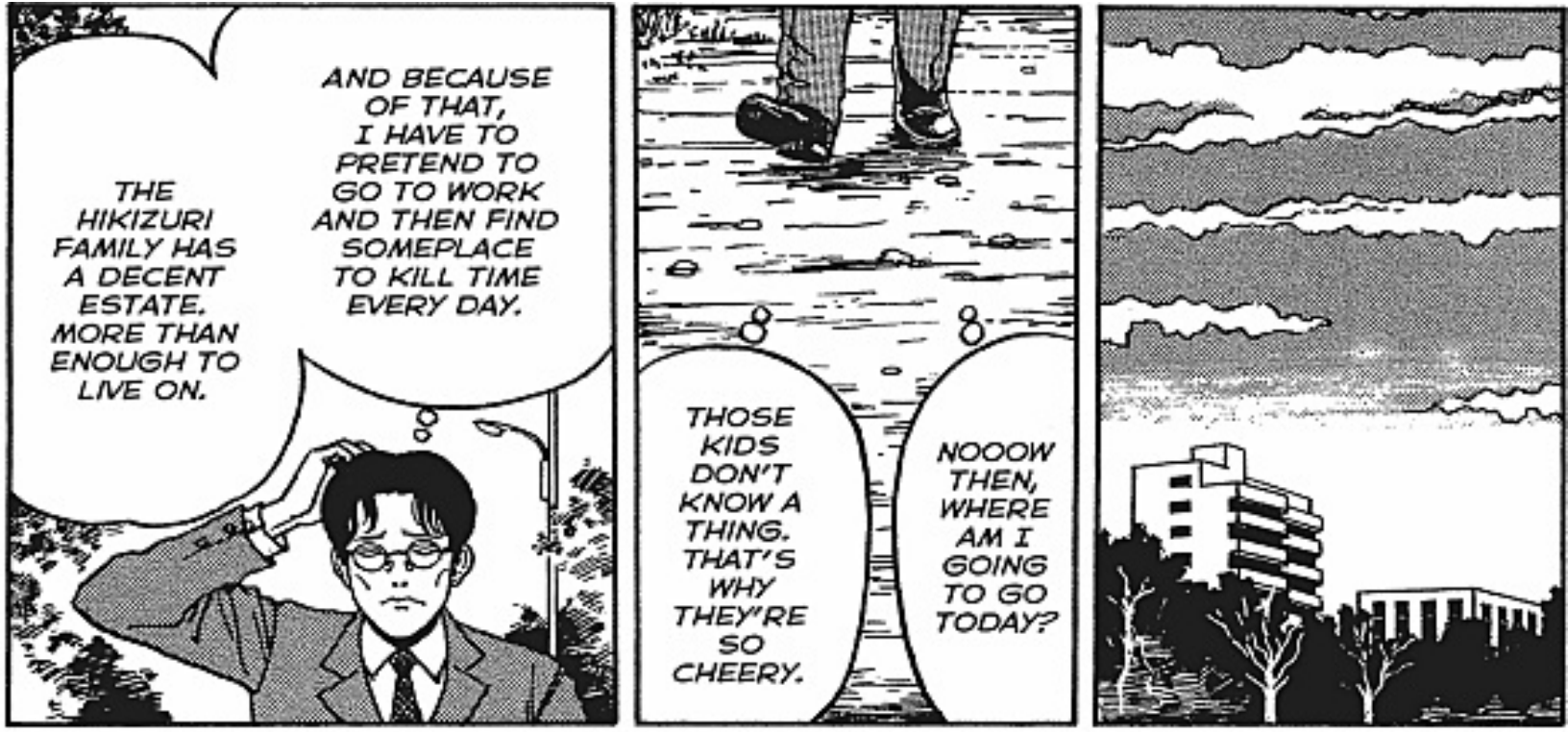

THANKS. I'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT.
GOOD LUCK AT WORK TODAY, KAZUYA!

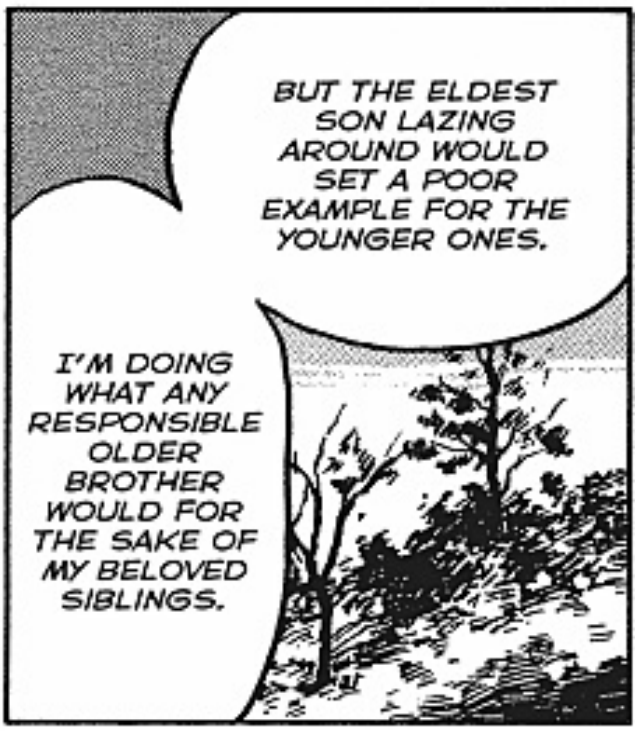


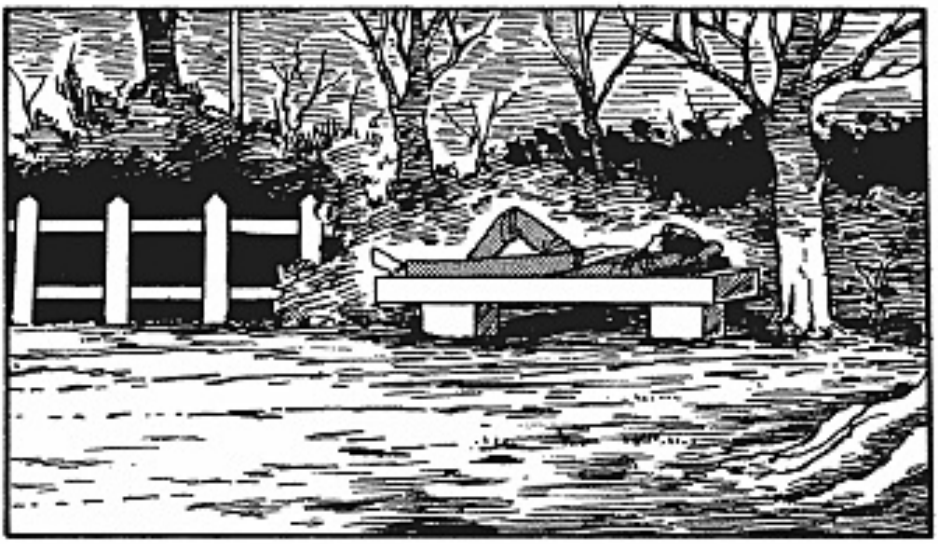

HE GOES OFF TO WORK EVERY DAY FOR US.
NARUMI, HITOSHI, MISAKO, LISTEN UP. KAZUYA'S VERY IMPORTANT. HE'S ONE OF THE ELITE, WORKING AT A MAJOR INSURANCE COMPANY.

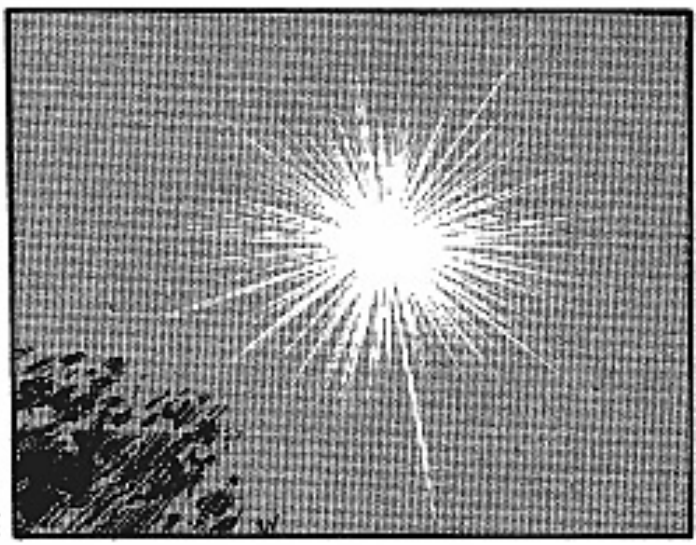
HAVE A GOOD DAY!
OKAY, I'M OFF THEN.


AND AS THE ELDEST SON, I'M ONLY FULFILLING MY NATURAL OBLIGATIONS ON BEHALF OF OUR DEAD PARENTS.
HA HA HA! SHIGORO, TALK ALL YOU WANT, BUT LITTLE MISAKO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THAT.


THE HIKIZURI FAMILY HAS A DECENT ESTATE. MORE THAN ENOUGH TO LIVE ON.
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I HAVE TO PRETEND TO GO TO WORK AND THEN FIND SOMEPLACE TO KILL TIME EVERY DAY.
THOSE KIDS DON'T KNOW A THING. THAT'S WHY THEY'RE SO CHEERY.
NOOOW THEN, WHERE AM I GOING TO GO TODAY?


BUT THE ELDEST SON LAZING AROUND WOULD SET A POOR EXAMPLE FOR THE YOUNGER ONES.
I'M DOING WHAT ANY RESPONSIBLE OLDER BROTHER WOULD FOR THE SAKE OF MY BELOVED SIBLINGS.



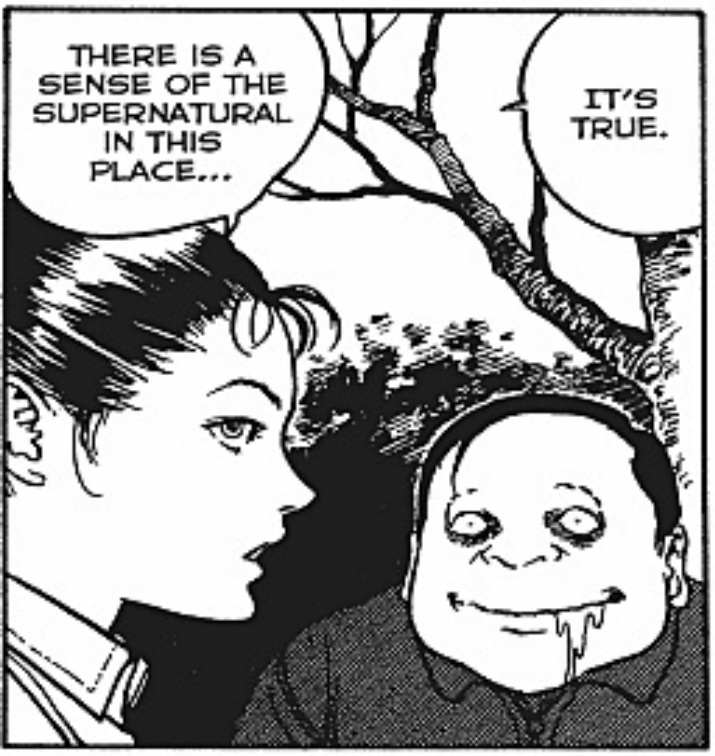


SNAP
SNAP
CHIKK
CHIKK
SNAP
SNAP

ARE YOU TAKING PICTURES OF THE VIEW? YOU HAVE AN EXCELLENT EYE.
DAZO
NO, I'M TAKING PHOTOS OF SPIRITS.
WITH YOU SHOOTING IT, I'M SURE THIS UTTERLY ORDINARY POND WILL TURN INTO ART.
SPIRITS?
YES. CHILDREN OFTEN DROWN IN THIS POND, AND I THOUGHT SOMETHING MIGHT SHOW UP. SO I'M TAKING PICTURES.

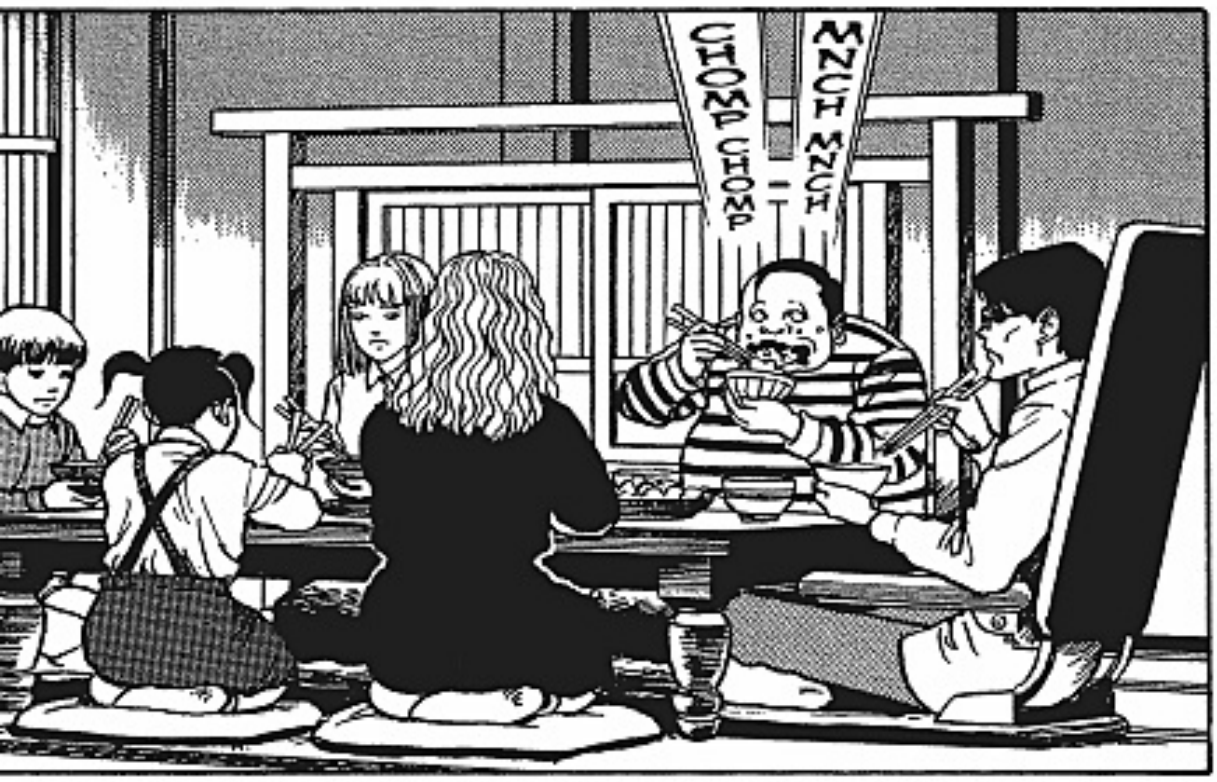
ME? SACHIYO. WHY?
I MYSELF AM GREATLY INTERESTED IN SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY. BY THE WAY, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
OH HO! IS THAT THE DIRECTION IN WHICH YOUR TASTES LIE?
...
I LIVE IN A MYSTERIOUS MANSION WITH A LITTLE OF THE SUPERNATURAL TO IT. I'M SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET SOME GOOD PHOTOS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT COMING TO MY HOUSE? I'M SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET SOME NICE PICTURES.
A FEW DAYS LATER
HA HA HA! NO NEED TO WORRY. I'M NO THREAT.
I AM KAZUYA HIKIZURI. I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU SOONER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY HOUSE? MY GARDEN? DOESN'T IT LOOK LIKE A GHOST COULD SHOW UP ANY SECOND?
SACHIYO, I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD COME TODAY.


THERE IS A SENSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THIS PLACE...
IT'S TRUE.

WE TRULY CHERISH THIS GRAVE.
THIS IS THE GRAVE WHERE OUR PARENTS SLEEP. OUR FATHER WAS STRICT, AND OUR MOTHER WAS VERY KIND.
FATHER GOZO
MOTHER MASUE

OH... MY NAME IS SHIGORO. LOVELY TO MEET YOU. HEE HEE HEE!
LET ME SHOW YOU AROUND THE GARDEN. IF WE GO OVER HERE, THERE'S AN EVEN MORE INCREDIBLE SPOT.
AAH, HELLO. HELLO. A PLEASURE, SACHIYO.
YOU'RE QUITE BEAUTI-FUL. HEE HEE HEE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK? THERE MIGHT JUST BE A BODY BURIED AT THE FOOT OF THIS DEAD TREE.
NO, I ONLY CAME TO TAKE PICTURES OF THE GARDEN. I HAVE TO GO SOON.
OH, SACHIYO. BY THE WAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TEA IN MY ROOM? WE CAN ENJOY SOME EXTRAORDINARY CAKE.
A-AHEM ...
HA HA HA! IS THAT SO? WELL THEN, SHIGORO HERE WILL SHOW YOU A LITTLE MORE OF THE GARDEN.

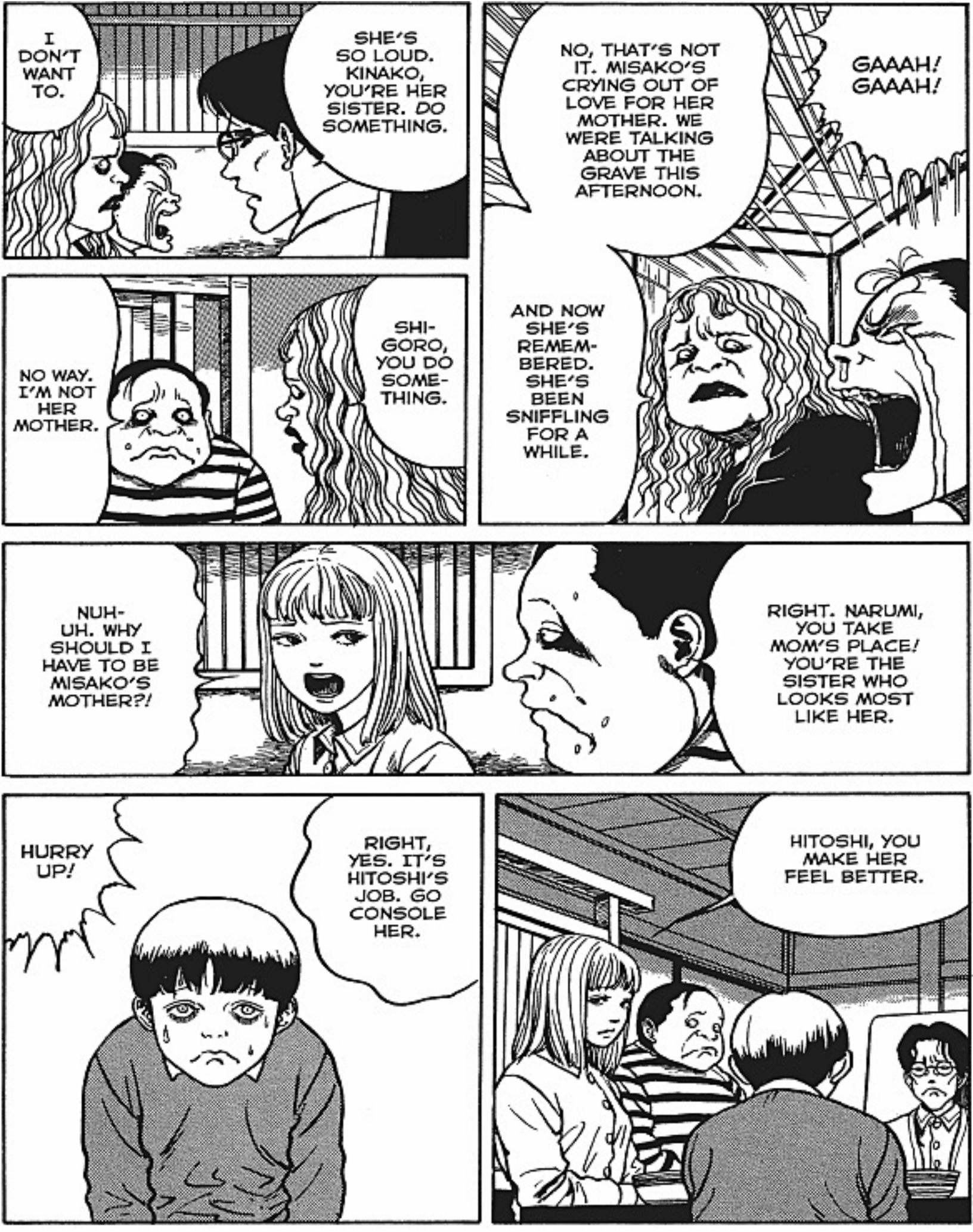

MUH MUH
CHOMP CHOMP

THAT NIGHT ...

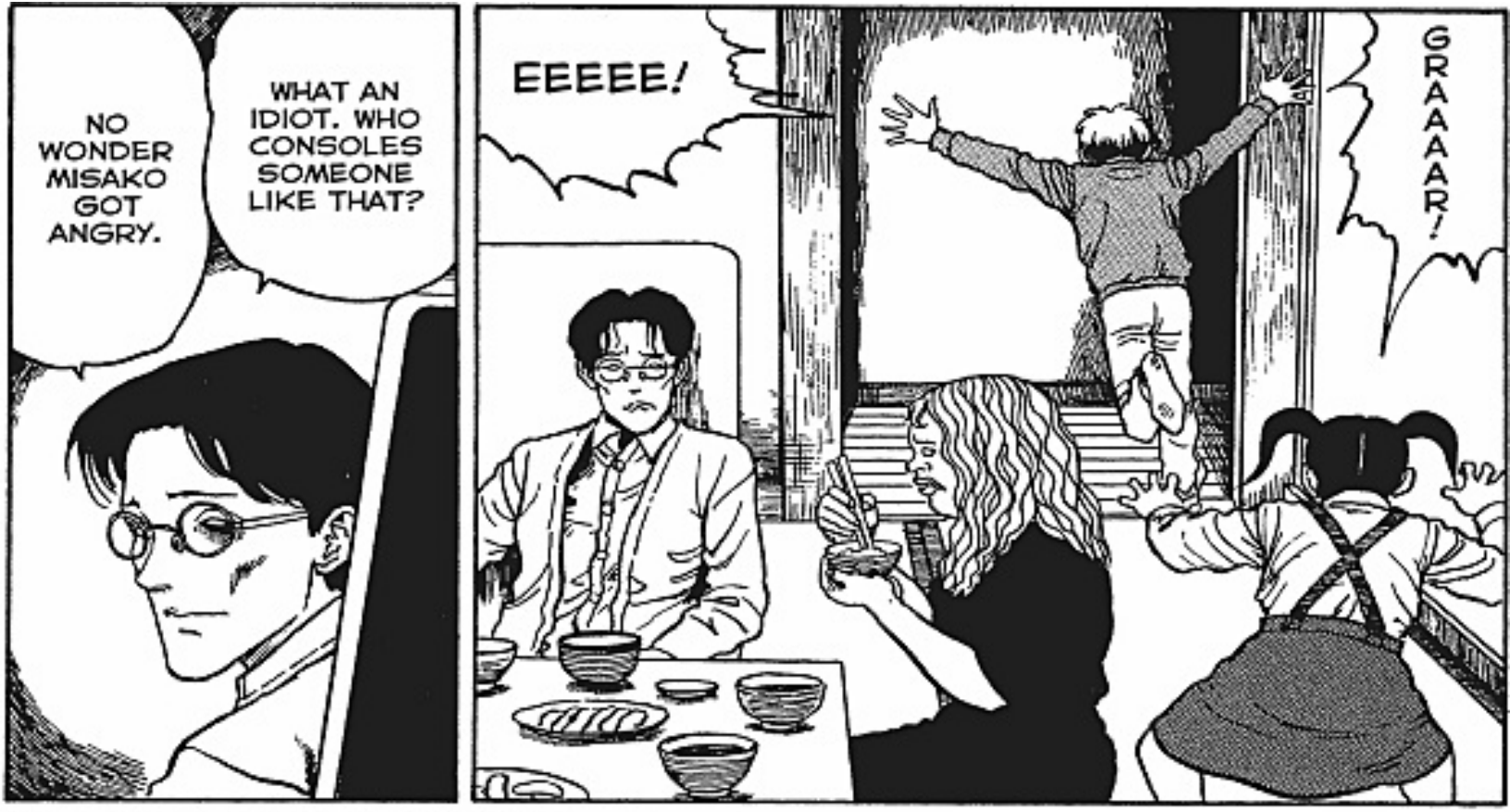
SLRP SLRP
GULP GULP

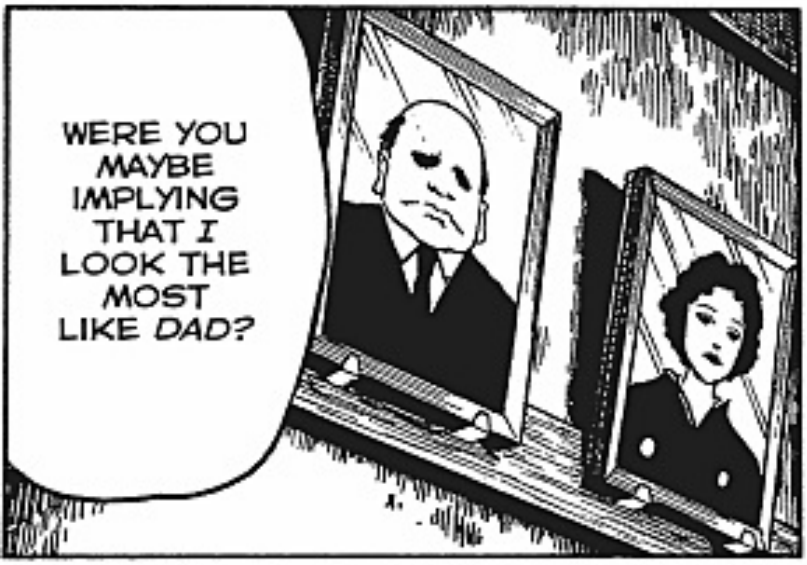
MUI MUI
MUI MUI

STARTING TOMORROW, NO SUPPER FOR YOU. MY ORDERS!
CAN'T YOU EAT MORE POLITELY? YOU'RE DISGUSTING TO WATCH!
HUH? WHAT?
SHIGORO!
ARE YOU DIS-OBEYING ME?!
SHUT UP! DON'T TALK BACK.
BAM
WHY NOW OF ALL—
WHAT? YOU'RE SO MEAN. WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT OUT OF THE BLUE? I'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS.
LOOK! YOUR YELLING MADE MISAKO CRY.
NGAAAH! NGAAAH!
NGH.

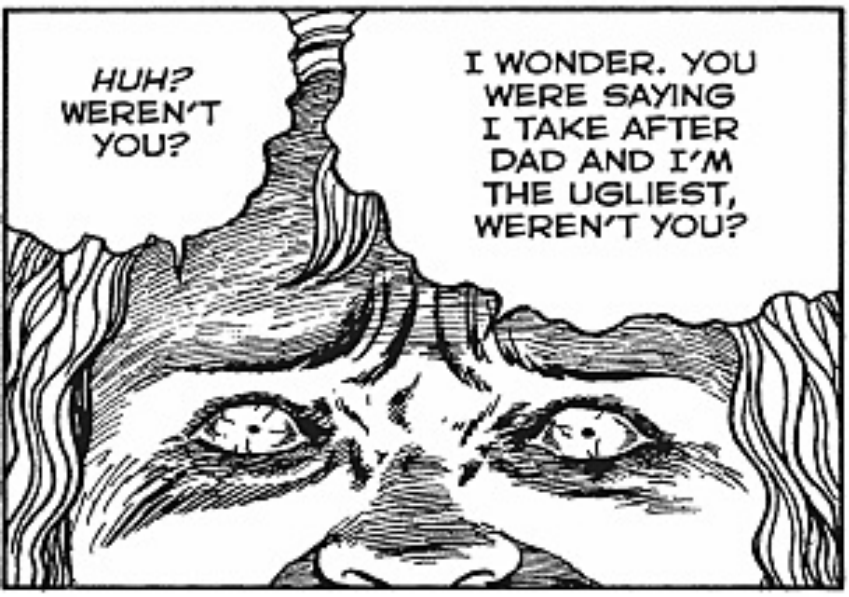

I DON'T WANT TO.
SHE'S SO LOUD. KINAKO, YOU'RE HER SISTER. DO SOMETHING.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT. MISAKO'S CRYING OUT OF LOVE FOR HER MOTHER. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE GRAVE THIS AFTERNOON.
GAAAH! GAAAH!
AND NOW SHE'S REMEMBERED. SHE'S BEEN SNIFFLING FOR A WHILE.
NO WAY. I'M NOT HER MOTHER.
SHIGORO, YOU DO SOMETHING.
NUH-UH. WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO BE MISAKO'S MOTHER?!
RIGHT. NARUMI, YOU TAKE MOM'S PLACE! YOU'RE THE SISTER WHO LOOKS MOST LIKE HER.
HURRY UP!
RIGHT, YES. IT'S HITOSHI'S JOB. GO CONSOLE HER.
HITOSHI, YOU MAKE HER FEEL BETTER.

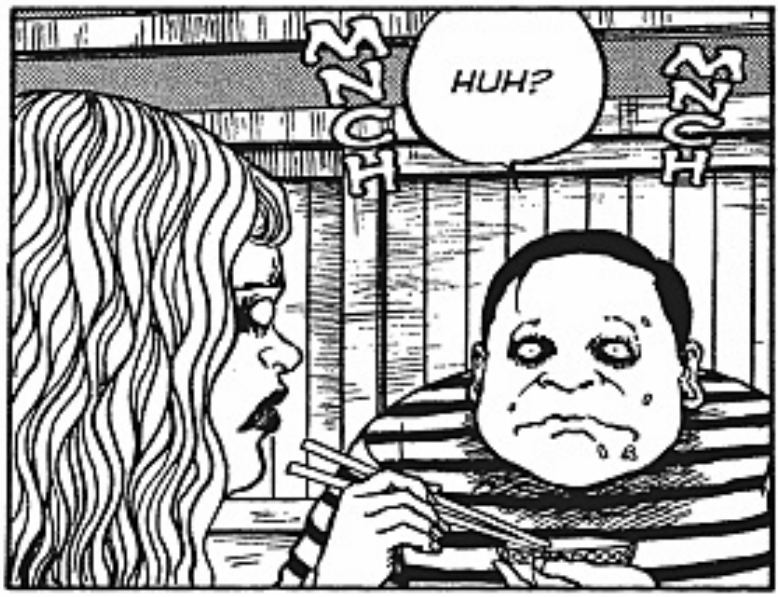
...
SO, UM, OKAY? MOM AND DAD WENT TO HEAVEN, MISAKO, SO YOU CAN'T SEE THEM ANYMORE. YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG.
GAAAH! GAAAH!
UPSY-DAISY.
EH HEH HEH ...
EH...
GRAR
EEEEEEE!
RRRRIP!
YOU'RE A LIAR! YOU'RE LYING! I'M DEFINITELY GONNA GET TO SEE MOM!
WAAAAAAAH!

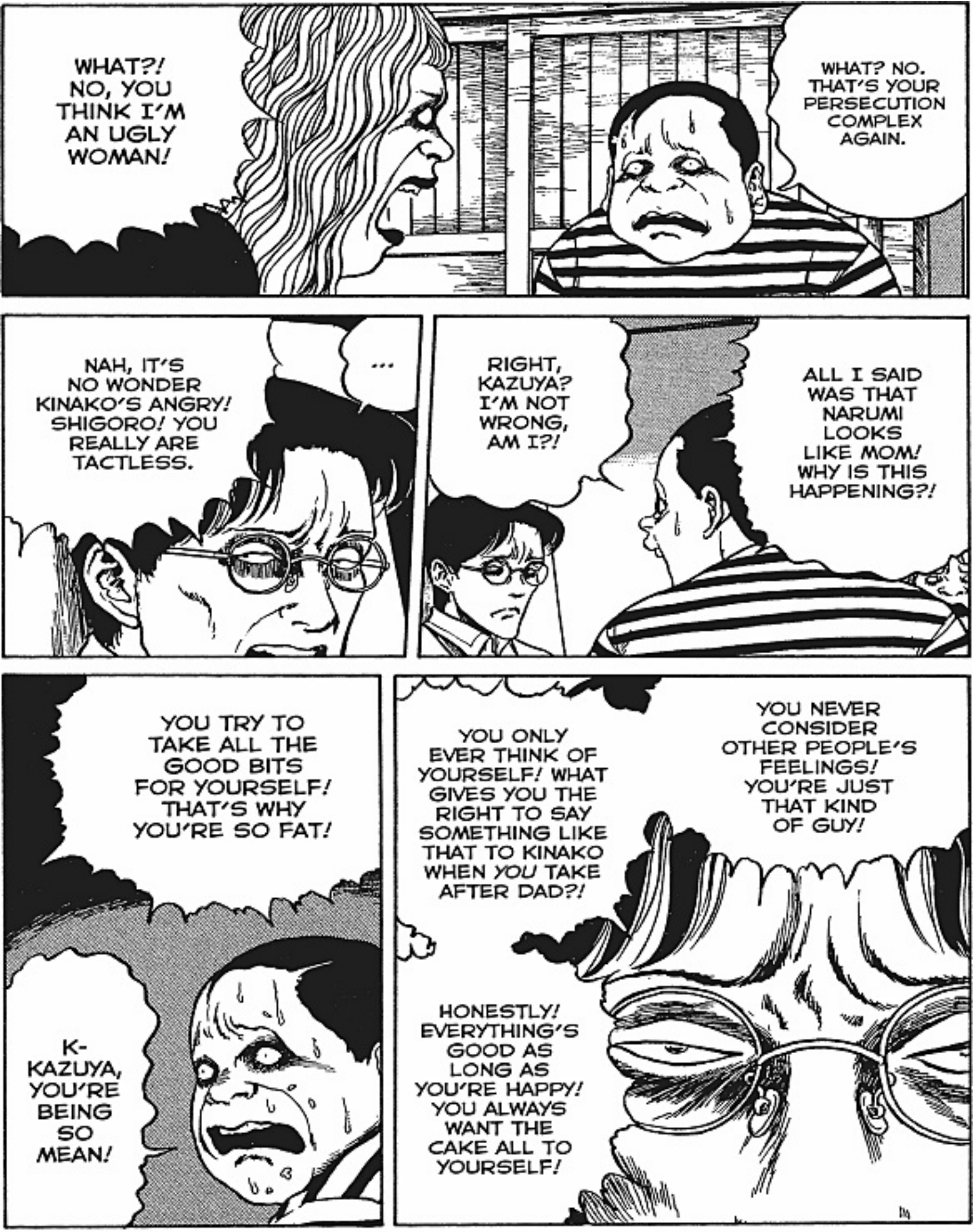

NO WONDER MISAKO GOT ANGRY.
WHAT AN IDIOT. WHO CONSOLES SOMEONE LIKE THAT?
EEEEE!
GRAAAAR!


WERE YOU MAYBE IMPLYING THAT *I* LOOK THE MOST LIKE *DAD*?

HUH? YEAH, I DID. WHY?
SAY, SHIGORO? BEFORE, YOU SAID THAT OF US SISTERS, NARUMI LOOKS THE MOST LIKE MOM.


HUH? WEREN'T YOU?
I WONDER. YOU WERE SAYING I TAKE AFTER DAD AND I'M THE UGLIEST, WEREN'T YOU?


HUH?
NZCH
NZCH

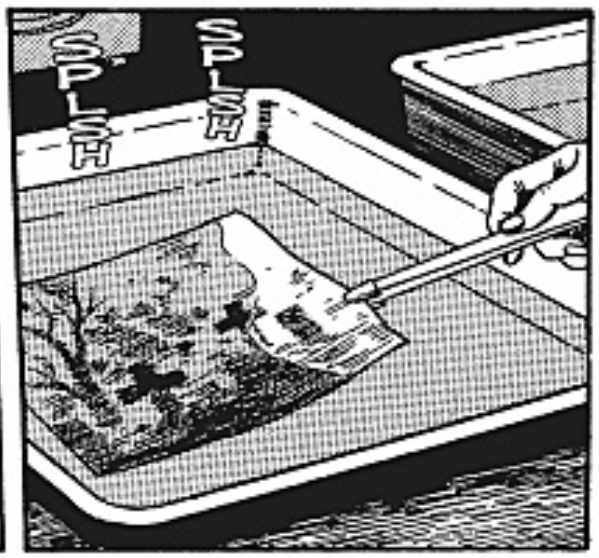

WHAT?! NO, YOU THINK I'M AN UGLY WOMAN!
WHAT? NO. THAT'S YOUR PERSECUTION COMPLEX AGAIN.
NAH, IT'S NO WONDER KINAKO'S ANGRY! SHIGORO! YOU REALLY ARE TACTLESS.
...
RIGHT, KAZUYA? I'M NOT WRONG, AM I?!
ALL I SAID WAS THAT NARUMI LOOKS LIKE MOM! WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?!
YOU TRY TO TAKE ALL THE GOOD BITS FOR YOURSELF! THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO FAT!
K-KAZUYA, YOU'RE BEING SO MEAN!
YOU ONLY EVER THINK OF YOURSELF! WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO KINAKO WHEN *YOU* TAKE AFTER DAD?!
YOU NEVER CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS! YOU'RE JUST THAT KIND OF GUY!
HONESTLY! EVERYTHING'S GOOD AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY! YOU ALWAYS WANT THE CAKE ALL TO YOURSELF!

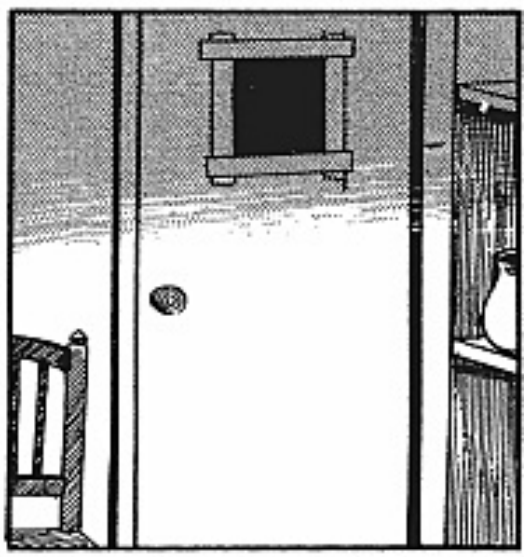
SHE
I'M GOING TO BED.
AAAH, NOPE. NO THANKS. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS.
GOOD NIGHT.
SHUT UP! WHINING LIKE THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A BOY. YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A TIRESOME NOBODY!
WHY ARE YOU SAYING ALL THIS, KAZUYA?!
YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO THE CONCEPT OF MANHOOD! YOU PIECE OF GARBAGE!
THAT'S SO MEAN... YOU'RE SO MEAN... I'M GOING TO BED. GOOD NIGHT!
SHIGORO! YOU'RE ABOUT TO BURST INTO TEARS OVER A THING LIKE THIS?! A MAN NEVER CRIES!
NO MATTER WHAT THE OCCASION, A MAN ENDURES WITH A STRONG WILL AND REACHES OUT TO THE OTHER PERSON WITH AN OPEN HEART.
THAT IS WHAT A MAN IS!

HMPH. IT'S FINE. I WANTED TO LET HIM HAVE IT JUST ONCE.
HEY, KAZUYA? MAYBE YOU WENT A LITTLE TOO FAR? IT'S TRUE SHIGORO WAS IN THE WRONG, BUT HE CAN'T HELP IT.
NGH NGH.
WHAT? HOW? HOW CAN WE LET HER SEE SOMEONE WHO'S DEAD?
MAYBE WE COULD LET MISAKO SEE OUR PARENTS. HOW ABOUT IT?
ANYWAY, KINAKO. I HAD THIS IDEA.
...CAN WE REALLY DO THAT?
BUT...
BUT I BELIEVE I CAN! I'M SURE I HAVE SPIRITUAL POWER.
WE WON'T KNOW UNLESS WE TRY.
WE CALL THE SPIRITS OF OUR PARENTS.
WE CALL UP THE DEAD. A SÉANCE.

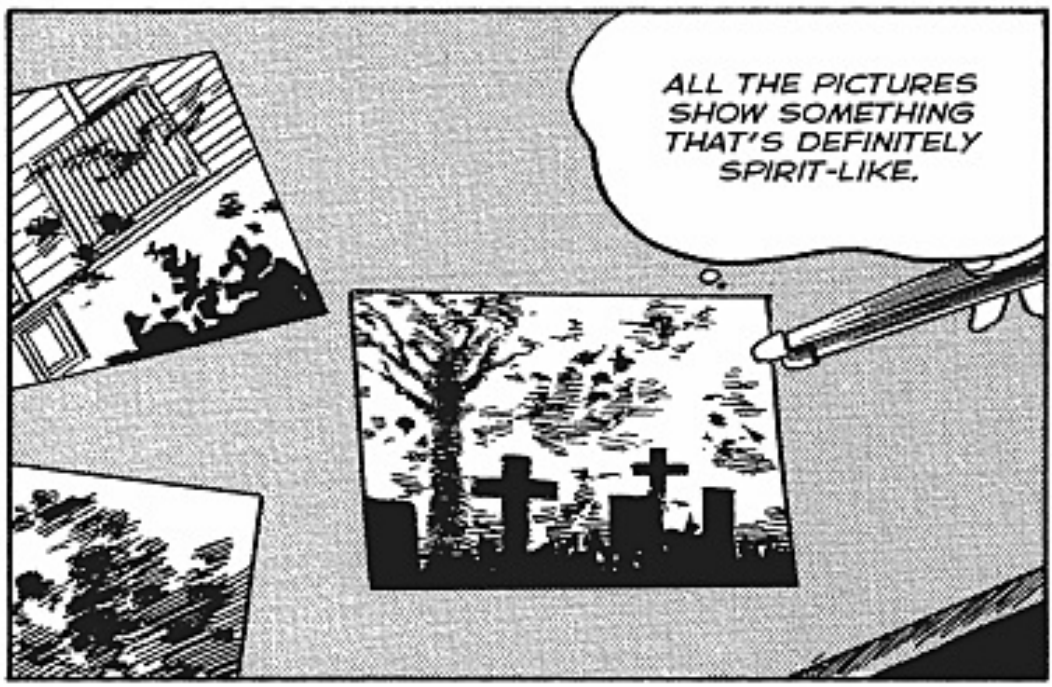
AND...I WAS THINKING OF INVITING HER— SACHIYO. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
AH! SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE REALLY AFTER.
D-DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

WOW... THIS IS AMAZ-ING.

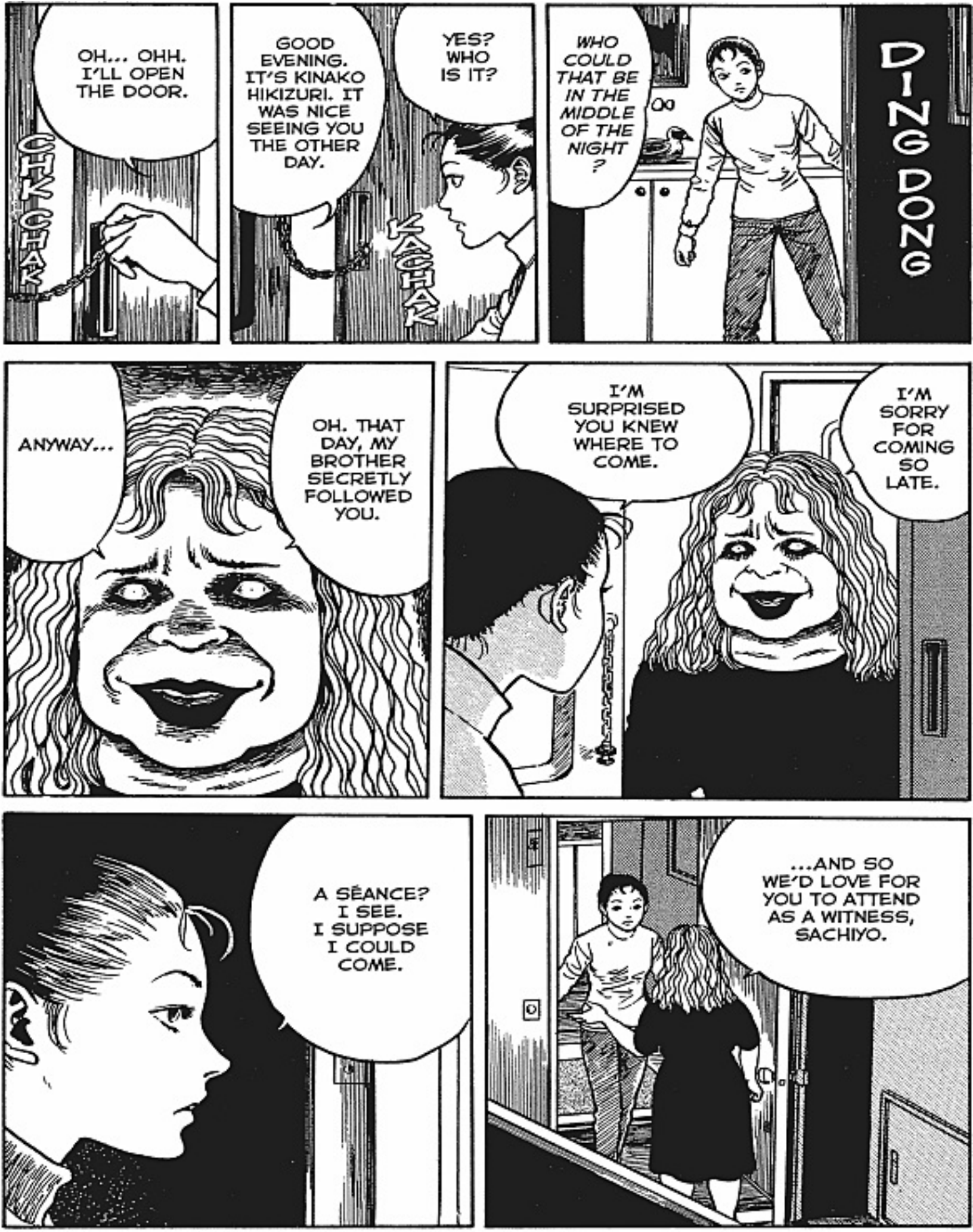

SPLSH
SPLSH

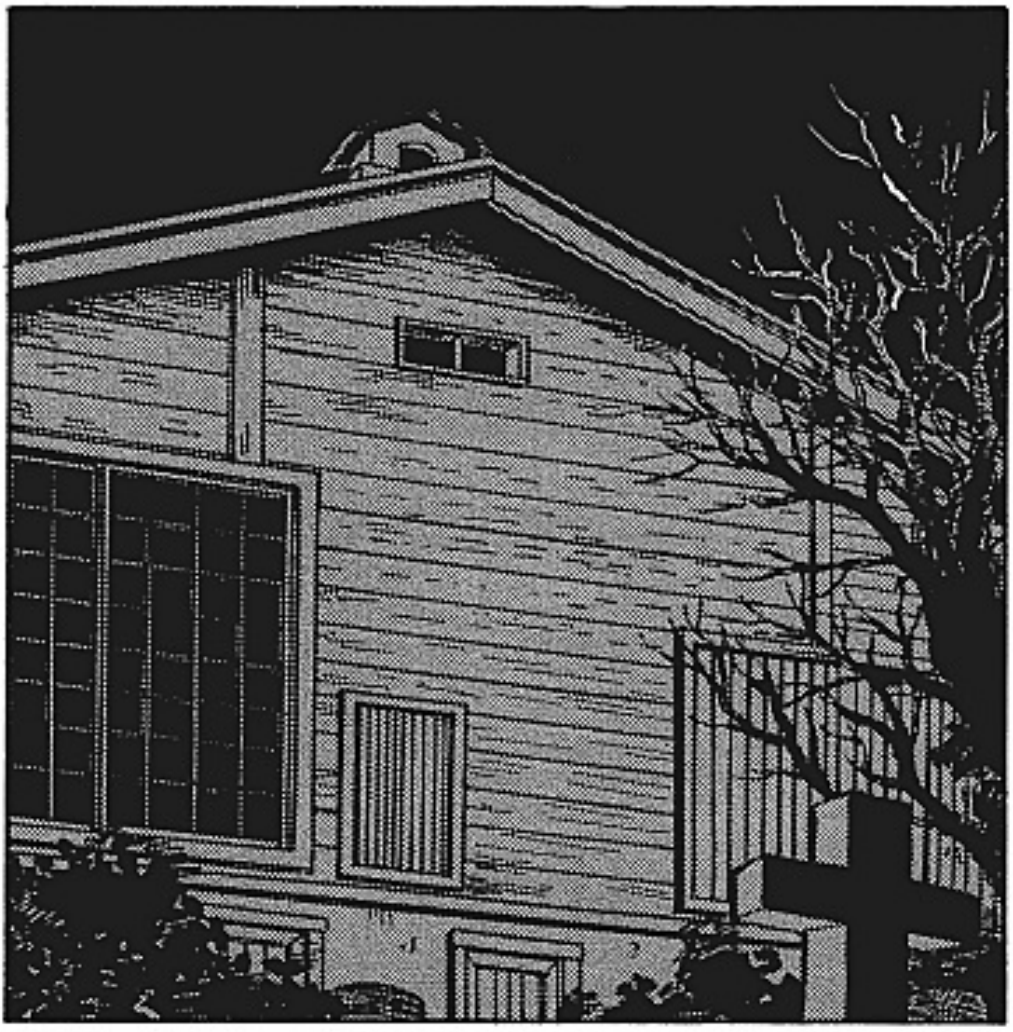


ESPECIALLY THIS ONE. THIS PHOTO'S INCREDIBLE.
BEHIND THIS CHILD...

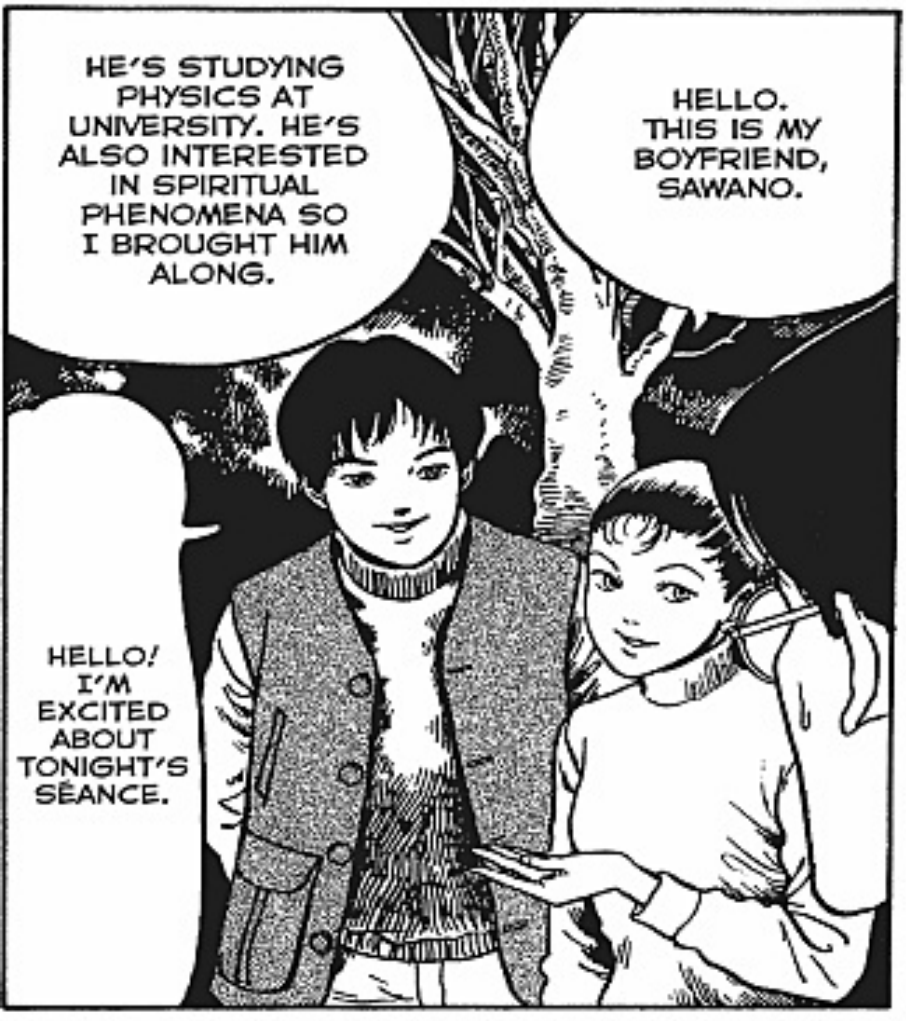

ALL THE PICTURES SHOW SOMETHING THAT'S DEFINITELY SPIRIT-LIKE.

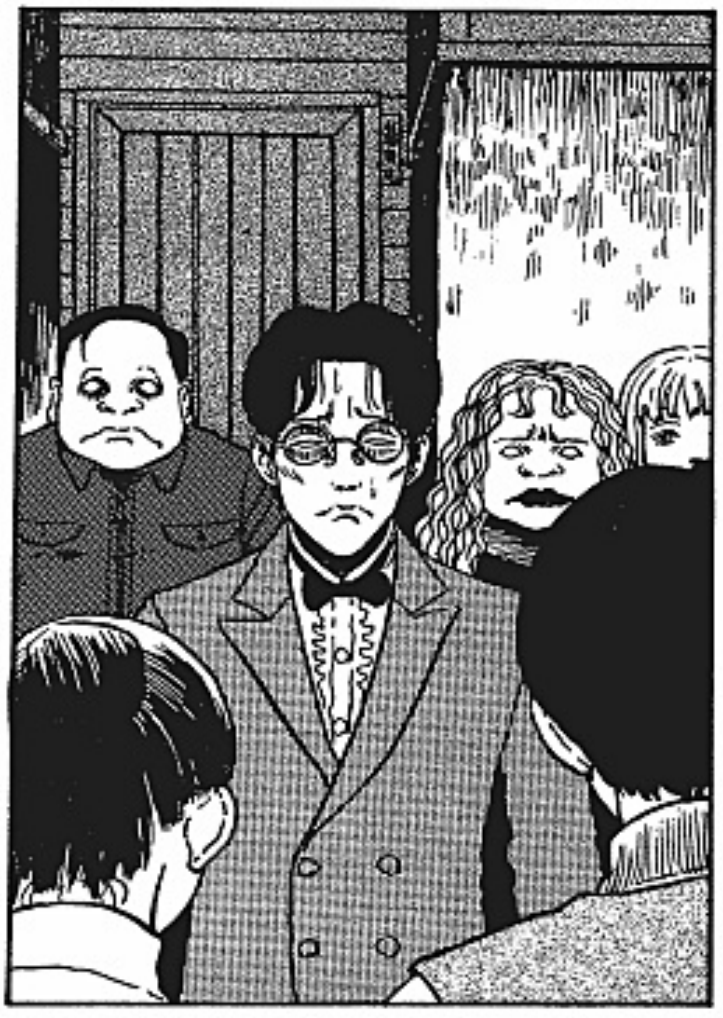
DING DONG


OH... OHH. I'LL OPEN THE DOOR.
CHK CHAK
GOOD EVENING. IT'S KINAKO HIKIZURI. IT WAS NICE SEEING YOU THE OTHER DAY.
YES? WHO IS IT?
KACHAK
WHO COULD THAT BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
DING DONG
ANYWAY...
OH. THAT DAY, MY BROTHER SECRETLY FOLLOWED YOU.
I'M SURPRISED YOU KNEW WHERE TO COME.
I'M SORRY FOR COMING SO LATE.
A SÉANCE? I SEE. I SUPPOSE I COULD COME.
...AND SO WE'D LOVE FOR YOU TO ATTEND AS A WITNESS, SACHIYO.



GOODNESS! SO YOU'LL COME? WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU!


HE'S STUDYING PHYSICS AT UNIVERSITY. HE'S ALSO INTERESTED IN SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA SO I BROUGHT HIM ALONG.
HELLO. THIS IS MY BOYFRIEND, SAWANO.
HELLO! I'M EXCITED ABOUT TONIGHT'S SÉANCE.



OUR OBJECTIVE HERE IS TO REUNITE MISAKO WITH HER PARENTS.
NOW THEN, WE WILL BEGIN THE HIKIZURI FAMILY SÉANCE.
WITCH
WITCH
YOU ARE... LOVELY. THE MORE WITNESSES, THE BETTER. PLEASE COME IN.
I'D ASK THAT YOU ALL STAY QUIET SO AS NOT TO OBSTRUCT MY MENTAL FOCUS.
I, KAZUYA HIKIZURI, WILL TAKE ON THE ROLE OF MEDIUM.
KEE KEE KEE! I'M SO HAPPY!
KEE KEE KEE! I'M SO HAPPY!!

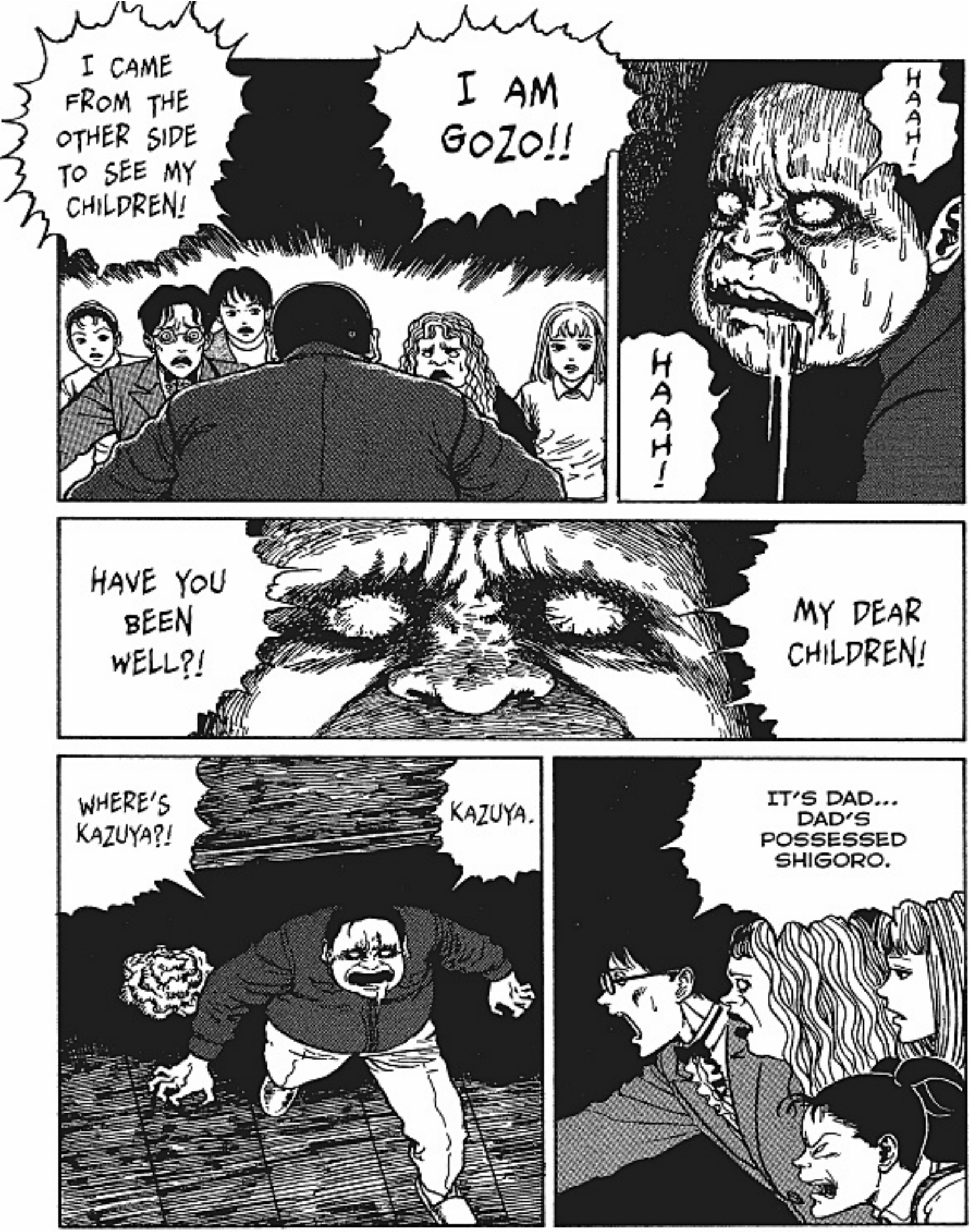
KEE KEE KEE! I'M SO HAPPY!!
KEE KEE KEE! I'M SO HAPPY!
HA... HA HA HA.
HITOSHI!
I MUSTN'T BE DISTRACTED. SOMEONE, MAKE HER BE QUIET.
AAAAH!
CHOMP
HNGAAH!
HEY, MISAKO. BE QUIET.
KEE KEE KEE!
WHAT ?!

WHAT? REALLY?
MISAKO! IF YOU'RE NOT QUIET, YOU WON'T GET TO SEE MOM AND DAD.
GRAR!
AAAAAH!
SOB SOB.
SOB SOB ...
FATHER GOZO MOTHER MASUE
ALL RIGHT. ONCE AGAIN...
...I WOULD LIKE TO CALL UP THE SPIRITS OF OUR PARENTS.

TWITCH
TWITCH
GLANCE
UH!
UHUH!
UH...
UH...
UNHGAAH!
URP!
UNH!

HRK!
HRK!
SHI-GORO, YOU OKAY?!
SHI-GORO!
AAAH! UNGAH!
HRRNGK!

ECTO-
PLASM!
UNH...
UNH...
YOU MEAN MATERIALIZA-TION!
IT IS... IT MIGHT TRANSFORM INTO YOUR PARENTS!
THRD


I CAME FROM THE OTHER SIDE TO SEE MY CHILDREN!
I AM GOZO!!
HAAH!
HAAH!
HAVE YOU BEEN WELL?!
MY DEAR CHILDREN!
WHERE'S KAZUYA?!
KAZUYA.
IT'S DAD... DAD'S POSSESSED SHIGORO.

DAD, I'M RIGHT HERE!! IT'S ME, KAZUYA!
D-DAD.
OF COURSE! I'M RAISING THEM LIKE I WAS THEIR REAL DAD!
ARE YOU TAKING CARE OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?!
OH! KAZUYA!
SO DON'T WORRY, DAD.
THEY RELY ON ME. WE'RE HAPPY TOGETHER.
LIAR !!

WHO'S THE ONE PRETENDING TO GO TO WORK?! WHO'S ALWAYS FOOLING AROUND?!
YOU SAY YOU'RE RAISING THEM?!
YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO FOOL THEM, BUT YOU CAN'T FOOL ME!
D-DAD... YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IDEA. THAT'S NOT TRUE. LISTEN TO ME.
YOU DON'T DO A SINGLE BROTHERLY THING. YOU JUST THROW YOUR WEIGHT AROUND!
DAD ...
D—
FROM NOW ON, SHIGORO WILL BE THE HEAD!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! YOU'RE NOT WORTHY OF BEING THE HEAD OF THE HIKIZURI FAMILY!

WORTHLESS SCUM, GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!
WHAT
YOU'RE A MAN! DON'T CRY!
AAH!
DAD... FORGIVE ME...
DAD ...
WHO NEEDS A FAMILY LIKE THIS?!
I-I'LL GO!
AAAA-AAH!
UNH ...
not

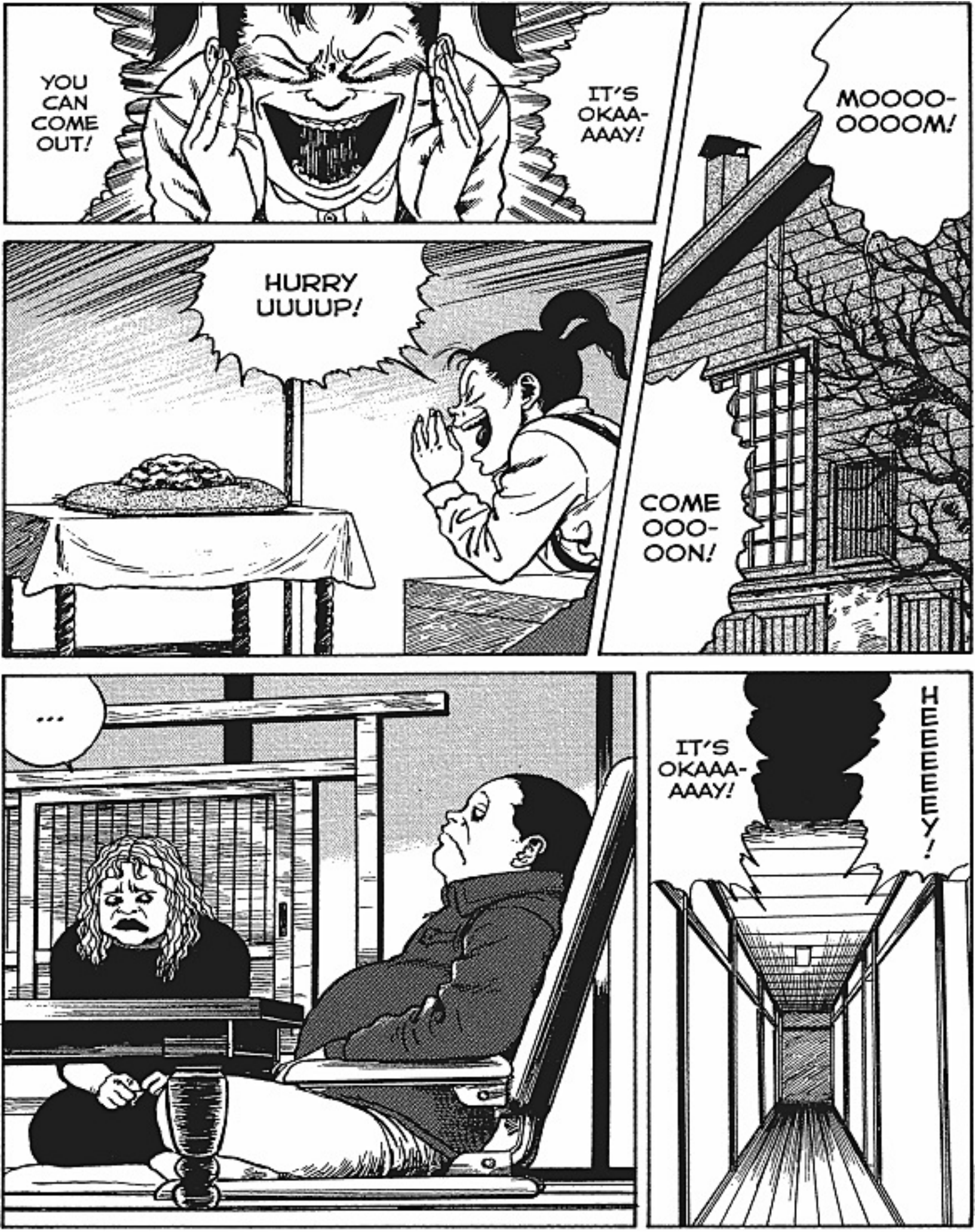
I SAID, GET OUT OF THE WAY!
STEP ASIDE ...
HI-TOSHI.
KUNK
GO TO HELL, YOU BASTARD!
THUD

LATER, HITOSHI.
HA! TAKE THAT!
DAD? DAD?
HAAH, HAAH.
I FELT KIND OF SICK. AND THEN...
W-WHAT'S GOING ON?
AH!
HAAH ...

YOU WERE POSSESSED BY DAD JUST NOW.
KAZUYA'S LEFT HOME.
WHAAAAT?! REALLY?!
WHAT? YOU'RE BACK TO BEING SHIGORO?
IS THAT THE ECTO-PLASM?
GAAA-AAAAH!
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG, MISAKO?
ISN'T MOM GOING TO COME?!
WHERE'S MOM?!
GAAA-AAAAH!

REALLY ?!
FINE... OH! THAT ECTOPLASM MIGHT TURN INTO MOM SOON. SO YOU GOTTA STOP CRYING.
GAAAAH!
DON'T START SCREAMING ABOUT THAT.
ALL RIGHT! KEE KEE KEE KEE KEE!
I'M SURE MOM'LL SHOW.
YEAH. TAKE IT BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND CALL HER.
BUT, WELL, SHOOT... IT SEEMS LIKE I'VE GOT SPIRITUAL POWERS. IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN HELP WITH YOUR SPIRIT RESEARCH.
SACHIYO. I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SEE THAT. HOW EMBARRASSING. HEE HEE HEE...

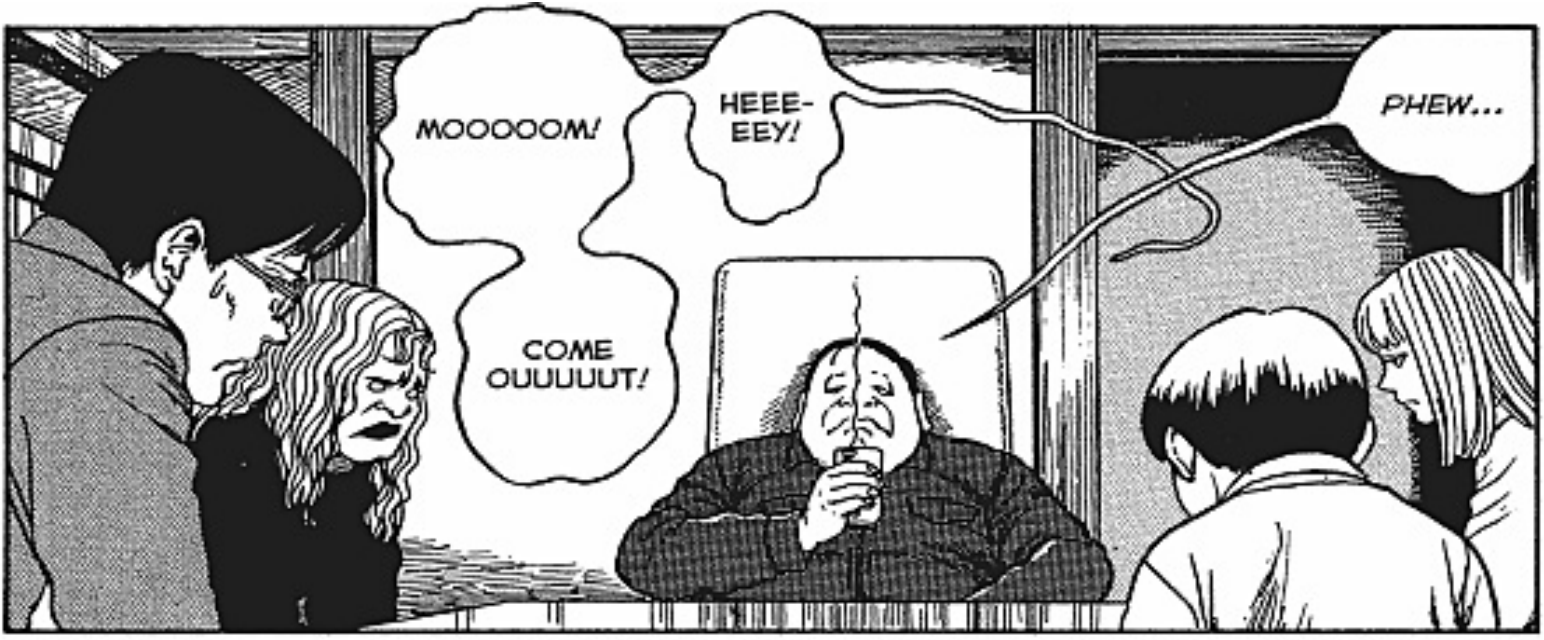
I DIDN'T SEE ANY OF THAT COMING. THE YOUNGER BROTHER HAVING THE SPIRIT POWER INSTEAD OF THE OLDEST, THE ECTOPLASM THAT DIDN'T ACTUALLY DO ANYTHING.
YEAH.
THAT WAS AMAZING, *HUH?*
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIGURE IT OUT WITH THIS SAMPLE.
WHAT? YOU GOT SOME ECTO-PLASM?!
BUT I GOT A VALUABLE SAMPLE. I SECRETLY GRABBED A BIT IN MY HANDKER-CHIEF.
THE TRUE NATURE OF ECTO-PLASM'S STILL A MYSTERY.
YES! I'LL ANALYZE THE COMPO-SITION AT MY LAB.


YOU CAN COME OUT!
IT'S OKAA-AAAY!
MOOOO-OOOOM!
HURRY UUUUP!
COME OOO-OON!
...
IT'S OKAAA-AAAY!
HEEEEEY!

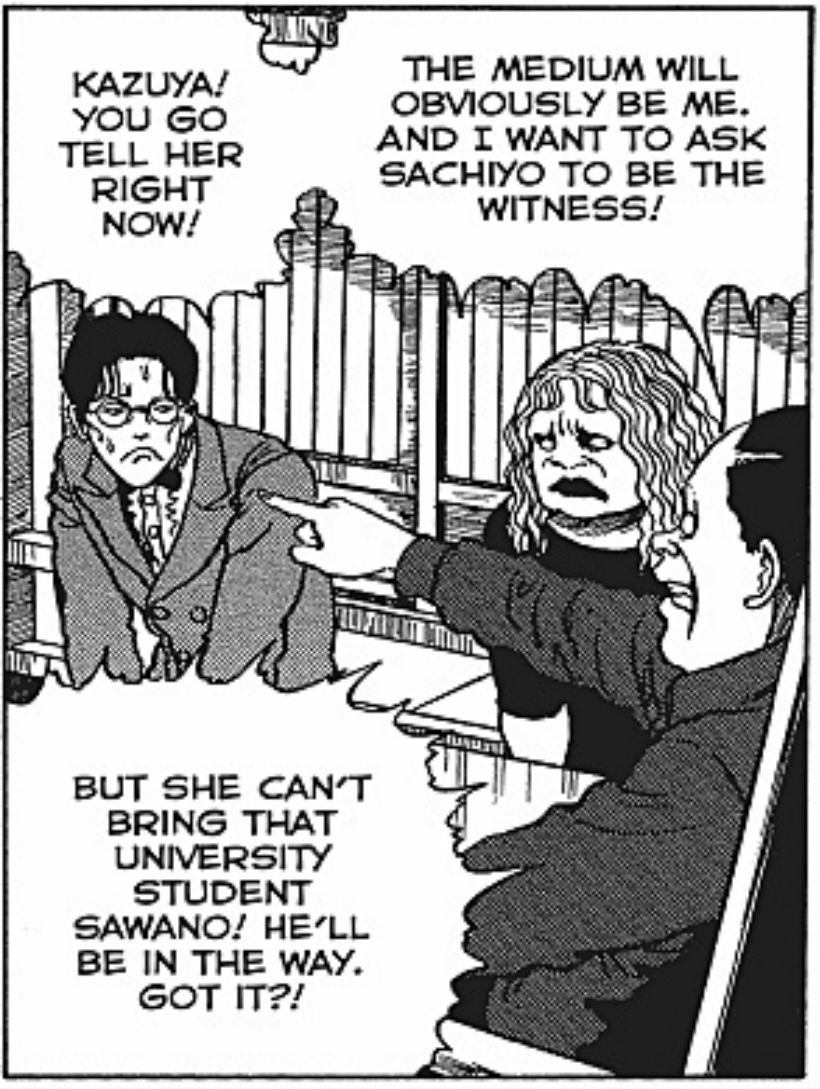
R-RIGHT AWAY.
DAD SAID SO HIMSELF!
HURRY UP! I'M THE MASTER OF THIS HOUSE!
HEY, KINA-KO.
TEA.
NGH ...
NOW!
...
... FINE!
NARUMI! GIMME A MASSAGE.
AAH, MY SHOUL-DERS HURT.
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
HITOSHI!
HITOSHI. YOU RUB MY FEET.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IF YOU TAKE THAT ATTITUDE WITH ME?
WHAT'S THAT LOOK FOR?!
YOU DISOBEY-ING ME?!
GAH!
BRAT!
YOU!
HAAH! HAAH!
YEAH!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE. COME IN ALREADY.
OH, YOU'RE BACK, KAZUYA. I GUESS YOU HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO GO SO YOU CAME CRAWLING BACK.
KAZUYA
HM?
...
BUT WHO KNOWS WHEN DAD WILL POS-SESS ME AGAIN.
HUH? YEAH ...
SHIGORO. YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL.
FWUMP
AH!
IT'S FOR ME!
SHOVE
O-OH, THANKS.
I MADE TEA.


MOOOOOM!
HEEE-EEY!
COME OUUUUUT!
PHEW...

SHE'S CALLING MOM'S SPIRIT.
IT'S OOOKAAAAY!
HEY, KINAKO? WHAT'S MISAKO DOING?


KAZUYA! YOU GO TELL HER RIGHT NOW!
THE MEDIUM WILL OBVIOUSLY BE ME. AND I WANT TO ASK SACHIYO TO BE THE WITNESS!
BUT SHE CAN'T BRING THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENT SAWANO! HE'LL BE IN THE WAY. GOT IT?!

I WANT TO HAVE ANOTHER SÉANCE TOMORROW NIGHT.
AHEM! ALL OF YOU, LISTEN TO ME!
OUR GOAL THIS TIME WILL BE TO CALL MOM'S SPIRIT FOR MISAKO!

SO WHAT WAS IT?
I FOUND OUT WHAT THAT SUBSTANCE REALLY IS, SACHIYO.
WHAT?! WHEAT FLOUR?!
THE RESULTS ARE SURPRISING. THAT ECTOPLASM WAS JUST WHEAT FLOUR. MIXED WITH WATER.
DING DONG
I WON-DER WHO THAT IS?
THAT FAMILY TRICKED US.
UH-HUH. BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE *REAL* ECTOPLASM IS MADE OF WHEAT FLOUR. WE WERE TOTALLY TAKEN IN.
THAT SÉANCE WAS A SHAM.
WOW...

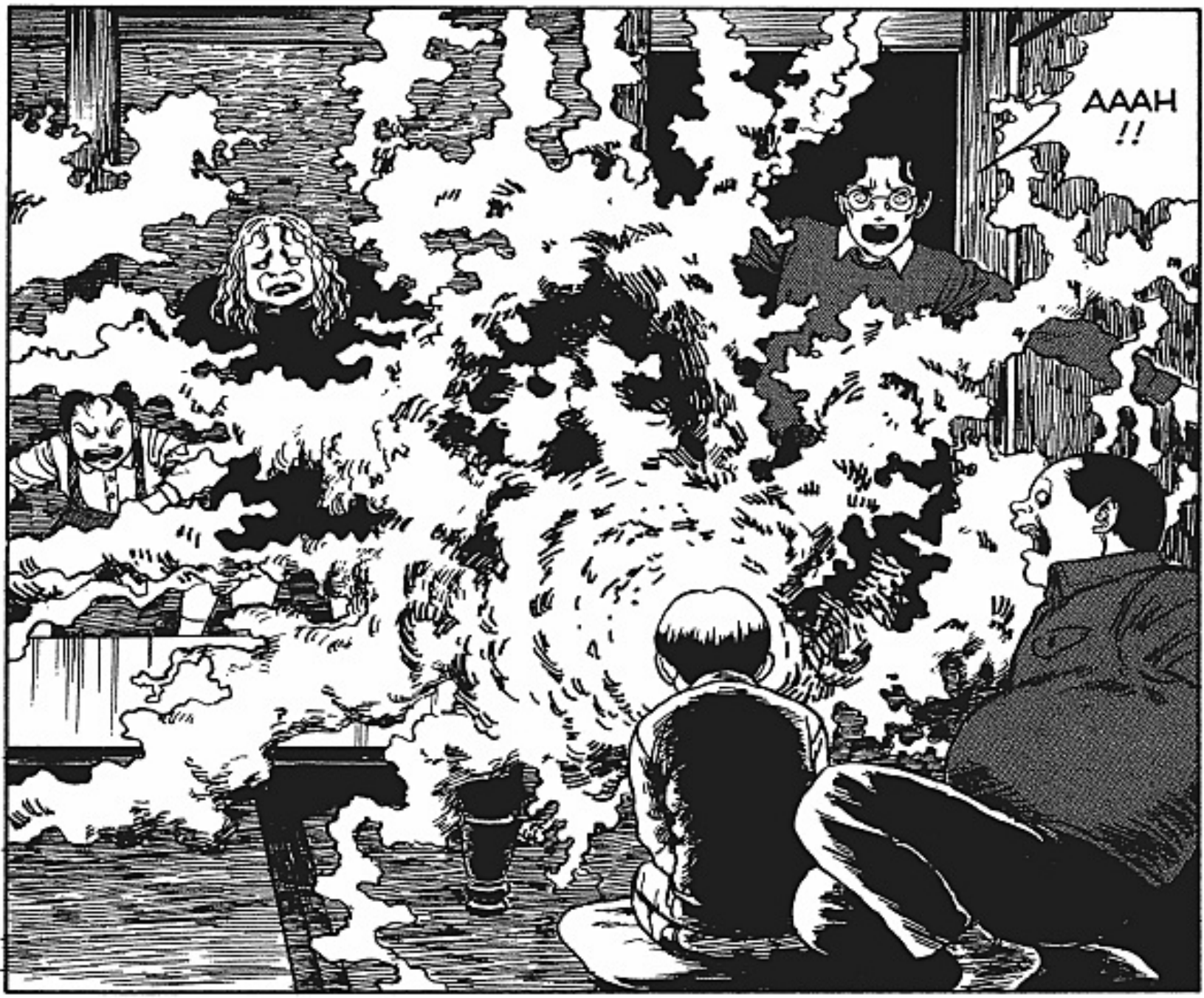
AND WE'D LOVE IT IF YOU WOULD BE A WITNESS—
SORRY FOR JUST STOPPING BY. THE TRUTH IS, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER SÉANCE TOMORROW NIGHT.
YES? ...OH!
O-OH, HELLO.
SLAM
HARA
DON'T EVER COME HERE AGAIN!
AH!
THAT ECTOPLASM WAS JUST WHEAT FLOUR! WE CHECKED IT OUT! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR BROTHER'S RIDICULOUS THEATER!
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF ATTENDING A SHAM SÉANCE!
SHI-GORO'S THE-ATER ?!
W-WHAT?! THE ECTO-PLASM WAS WHEAT FLOUR?

GAAAA-AAAAH!
GAAAAAAAA-AAAAAAAH!
YOU'RE A BIG LIAR, SHI-GORO!
YOU LIED!
WHAT? YOU'RE BEING REALLY LOUD, MISAKO.
THIS TIME, MOM'S FOR SURE GOING TO SHOW UP.
OH, DON'T WORRY. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER SÉANCE TOMORROW.
WHAT? REALLY?!
AND NOW IT'S ALL HARD AS A ROCK AND IT'S GROWING MOLD!
IT'S NOT TURNING INTO MOM, NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT!

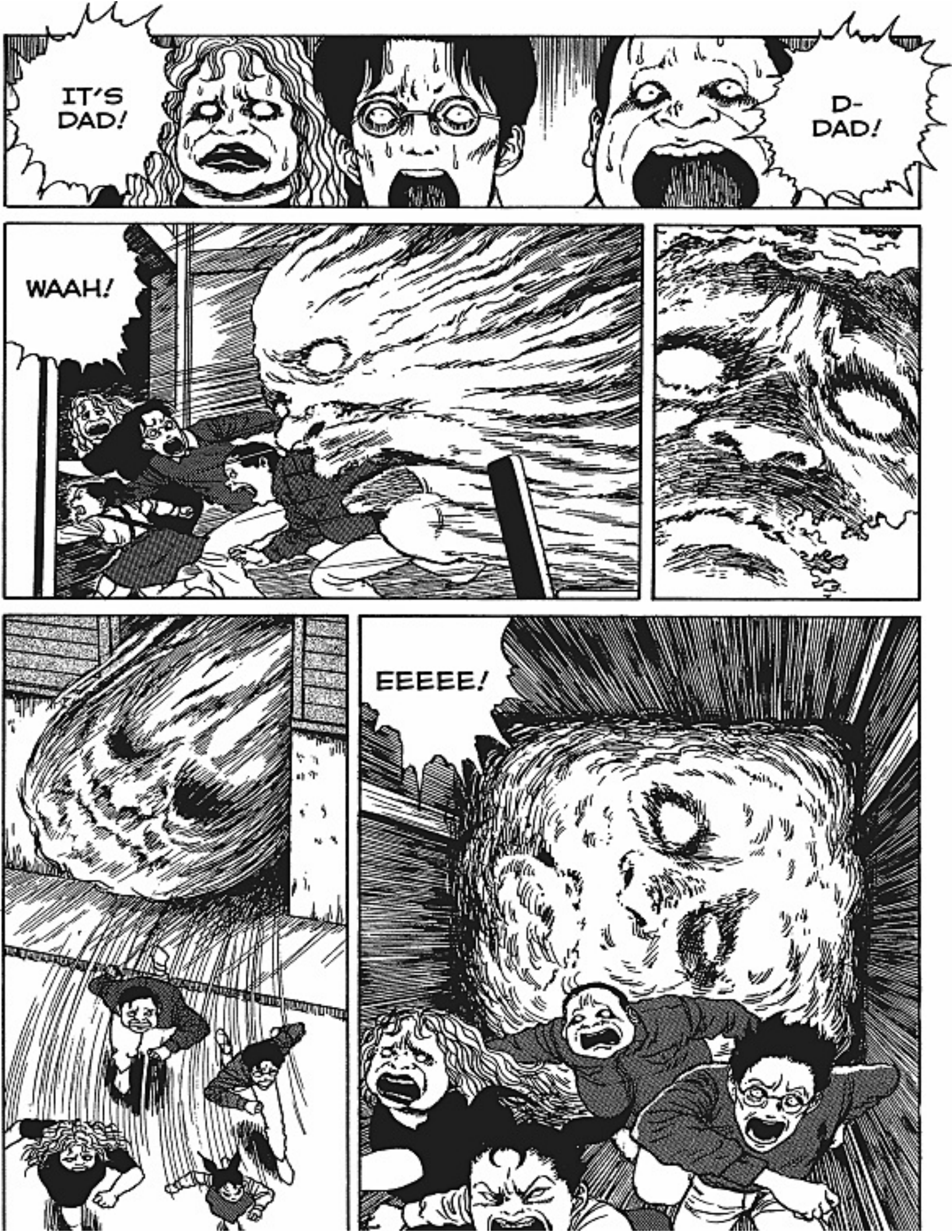
HEY! SHIGORO!
YAY
BANG
YES, REALLY.
ZOT
REALLY REALLY ?!
DON'T PLAY DUMB, YOU JERK!
W-WHAT ARE YOU—
YOU REALLY GOT ME, HUH?
PRETENDING YOU WERE POSSESSED BY DAD! YOU'RE GONNA GET IT NOW!
W-WHAT?
YOU'RE BACK ALREADY ?
I CAME FROM THE OTHER SIDE TO SEE MY CHILDREN !
H-HNGH! I-I AM GOZO!
...

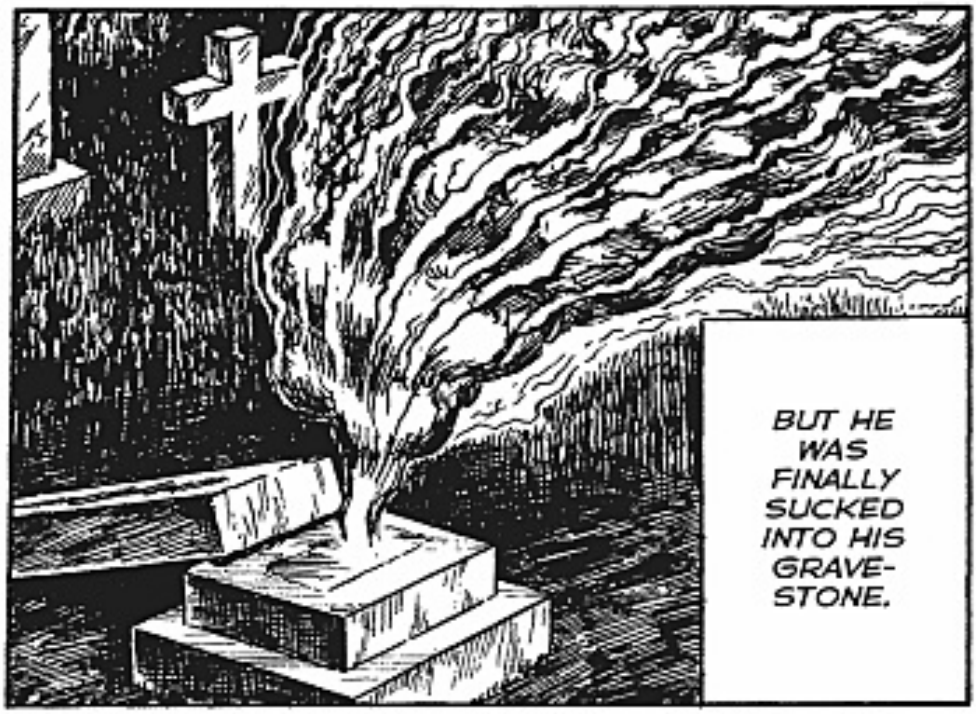
KAZUYA! IS THAT YOU, KAZUYA?!
YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF DAD?!
K-KAZUYA! CALM DOWN! JUST CALM DOWN.
KRAK
HRNGH!
SHUT UP! YOU THINK I'M FALLING FOR THAT?!
I ONLY PRETENDED THAT I RESPECTED HIS DIGNITY!
YOU FOOL! I WAS NEVER AFRAID OF DAD!
IF YOU'RE GONNA KILL SOMEONE, THEN KILL HIM!
OH! HELP!
EEEEEE! HELP!
YOU HAD NO IDEA AND YOU DREAMED ALL THIS UP... I'LL KILL YOU!

WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING TO YOUR FACE?
C'MON! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
HITOSHI! OUT OF THE WAY!
EEEP!
BAM
YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN TO GIVE UP!
I SAID, MOVE!!
AH!
...


AAAH
!!

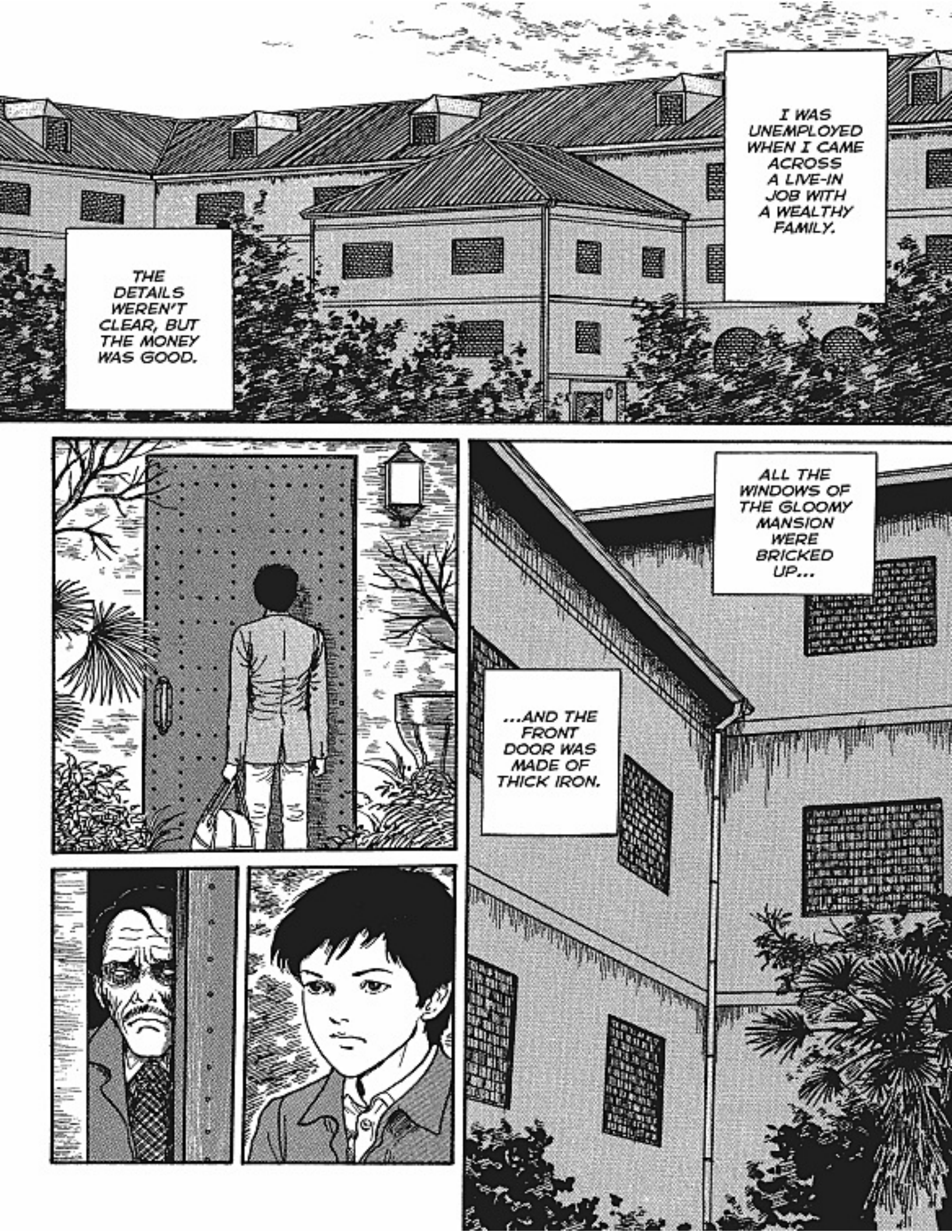
AAAAH
!!


IT'S DAD!
D-DAD!
WAAH!
EEEEE!



THE SÉANCE/END

THE MANSION OF PHANTOM PAIN
幻痛屋敷
げんつうやしき


I WAS UNEMPLOYED WHEN I CAME ACROSS A LIVE-IN JOB WITH A WEALTHY FAMILY.
THE DETAILS WEREN'T CLEAR, BUT THE MONEY WAS GOOD.
ALL THE WINDOWS OF THE GLOOMY MANSION WERE BRICKED UP...
...AND THE FRONT DOOR WAS MADE OF THICK IRON.

I'M THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, KAMISHIRO.
YOU'RE KOZEKI, YES? THANKS FOR COMING.
SLAM
WHAT? OH... SURE.
HURRY! GET INSIDE!
HELLO. I'M SUPPOSED TO START TODAY—
AND SO WE HAD TO COVER THE WINDOWS.
THE TRUTH IS, MY ONLY SON IS ILL.
ALL THE WINDOWS ARE BRICKED OVER.
IT'S DARK, SO WATCH YOUR STEP.
IS SUNLIGHT NOT GOOD FOR HIM?
OH.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT ...

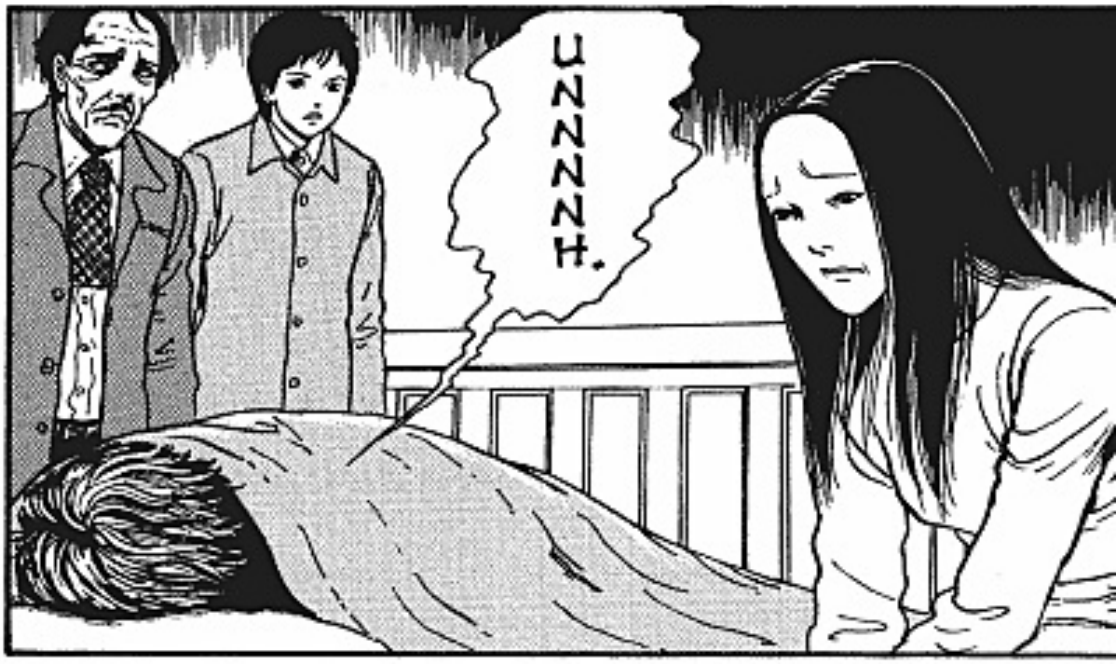
WA!
AM
THD THD THD
I'LL SHOW YOU TO HIS ROOM.
ANYWAY ...
I'M SORRY!
YOU! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
AH! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
ANOTHER EMPLOYEE. WE HAVE FIVE RIGHT NOW, BUT WE'RE STILL SHORT-STAFFED.
WHO WAS THAT?
THD THD THD THD THD THD
SURE. ON YOUR WAY THEN.
WELL, I'M IN A HURRY, SO...

THIS IS HIS ROOM.
NOT COMPARED WITH MY SON'S PAIN.
A CUT LIKE THIS IS NOTHING.
HM? OH...
ARE YOU OKAY? YOU'RE BLEEDING.
MY WIFE AND SON.

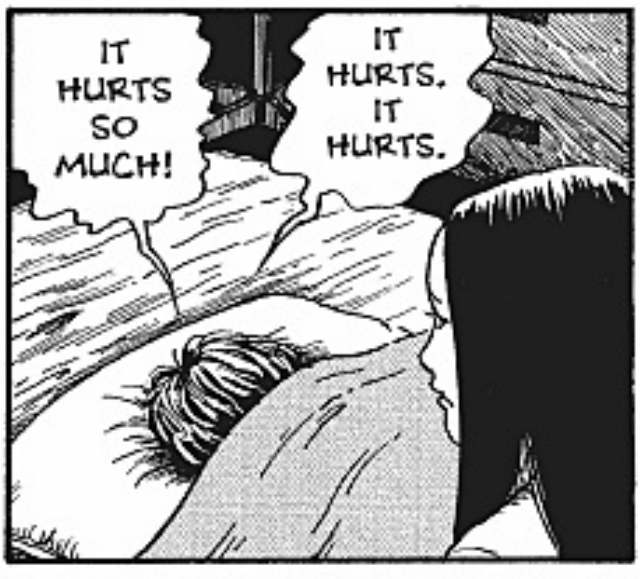
HE'S THE TEAM LEADER.
AND THAT'S MIZUNO.

HIS JOB.
WHAT'S HE DOING ...?

UNNNH.
UHHH...


UNNNH.

IT HURTS! MOMMY... RUB IT.
MY POOR LITTLE YUSUKE...


IT HURTS SO MUCH!
IT HURTS. IT HURTS.

WHERE DOES IT HURT NOW?
I'LL RUB IT FOR YOU.
HERE?
YEAH ...
AROUND HERE?
MORE TO THE RIGHT...
NOT YET.
IS THAT A LITTLE BETTER?

HE'S REALLY HURTING. IN IMPOSSIBLE PLACES...
MY SON HAS PAIN ALL OVER.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE SURPRISED, KOZEKI?
BUT MY SON HASN'T LOST ANY PART OF HIS BODY. AND THE PLACES WHERE HE HURTS ARE SPACES NOT CONNECTED TO HIS BODY.
PHANTOM PAIN IS THE SYNDROME WHERE A PERSON FEELS PAIN IN ARMS AND LEGS THAT THEY'VE LOST IN SURGERY OR AN ACCIDENT.
THE WAY HE HURTS IN IMPOSSIBLE PLACES, HIS ILLNESS RESEMBLES PHANTOM PAIN.
IT MIGHT BE A DELUSION BORN OF AN EXCESSIVE FEAR OF PAIN. HOWEVER...
AND INDEED, HE HAS BEEN MORE SENSITIVE TO PAIN THAN OTHER PEOPLE SINCE HE WAS SMALL.
THE DOCTORS KEEP SAYING IT'S PSYCHO-LOGICAL.

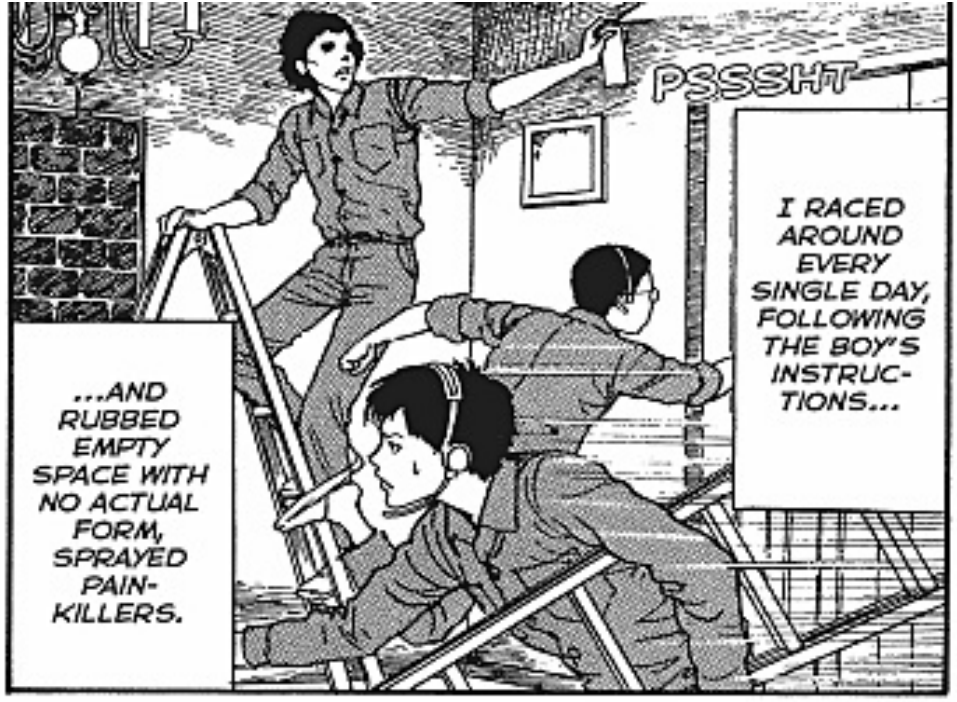
WHERE DOES IT HURT, YUSUKE?
PLEASE GIVE ME A DETAILED LOCATION!
THIS IS HASHIMOTO. I'VE ARRIVED IN THE SAKURA ROOM ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE FIRST FLOOR.
A LITTLE HIGHER.
...HERE?
HURRY AND RUB IT.
NEAR THE WALL ON YOUR LEFT...
AT FIRST, IT WAS THE SPACE IMMEDIATELY AROUND HIS BODY.
THE ISSUE NOW IS THAT THE RANGE OF HIS PAIN IS GRADUALLY GROWING.
KOZEKI.
IT WAS ALL WE COULD DO TO BLOCK THE WINDOWS SO HIS PAIN WOULDN'T PUSH OUTSIDE.
BUT NOW IT'S EXPANDED TO THE ENTIRE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE.

IT HURTS SO MUCH!
IT HURTS ...
YES. TO MANAGE MY SON'S PAIN INSIDE THE HOUSE.
SO THEN... MY JOB IS...
ALL RIGHT.
MIZUNO, THAT'S ENOUGH THERE. GO TO THE THIRD FLOOR.
NEAR THE CEILING OF THE MAPLE ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR!
MY POOR DEAR YUSUKE. WHERE DOES IT HURT NOW?
THE PAIN DOESN'T CARE IF IT'S DAY OR NIGHT.
KOZEKI, THIS IS A REALLY TOUGH JOB.
RIGHT ...
KOZEKI, YOU GO WITH HIM AND WATCH.
O-OKAY ...

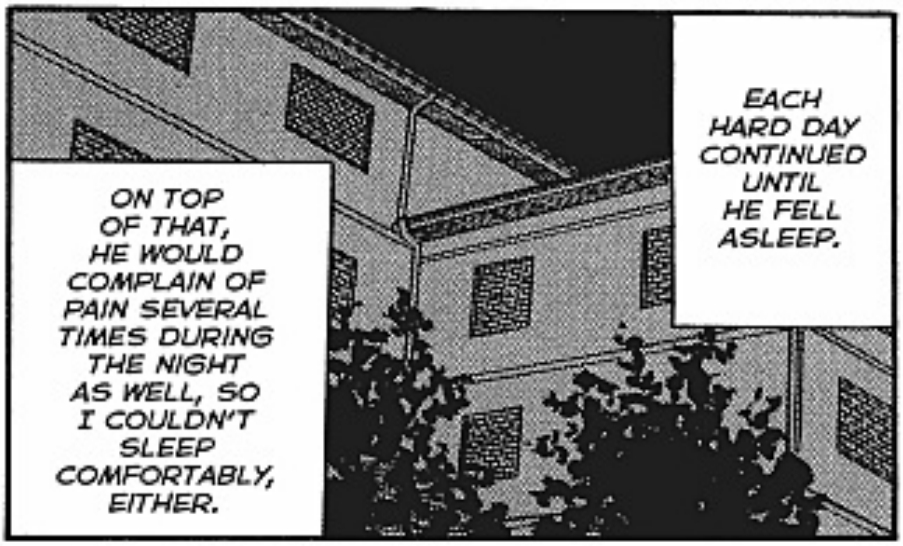
SO LONG AS WE DO WHAT WE'RE TOLD, WE GET PAID.
I'M OF THE SAME OPINION. BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I MEAN, PAIN IN THE SPACE OUTSIDE YOUR OWN BODY. MAYBE THE BOY'S LYING?
BUT... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
DETAILS PLEASE!
WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE MAPLE ROOM!
HERE? ABOVE THIS SPOT?
YES... YES... FARTHER IN...
GIVE ME A HAND, KOZEKI.
THIS ONE'S BIG.
...YOU START TO FEEL LIKE HIS PAIN ALL OVER THE PLACE REALLY EXISTS. IT'S STRANGE.
BUT WHEN YOU DO THIS LIVE-IN WORK FOR A WHILE...

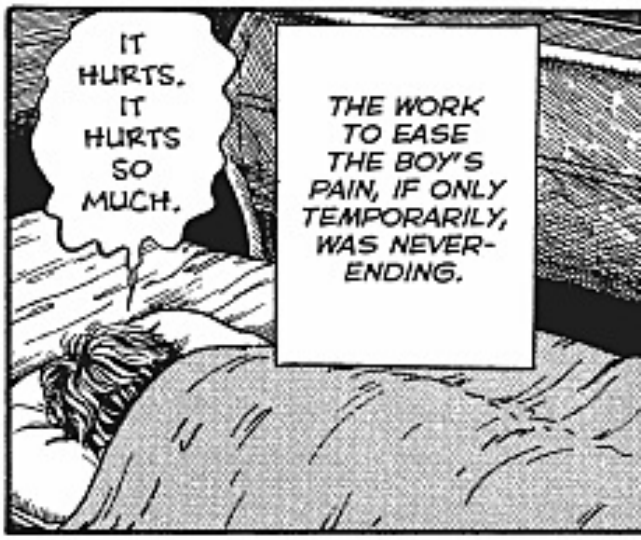
MAYBE LIKE THIS?
HERE?
YOU RUB THAT SPOT.
AH!
?!
CRASH
OH!

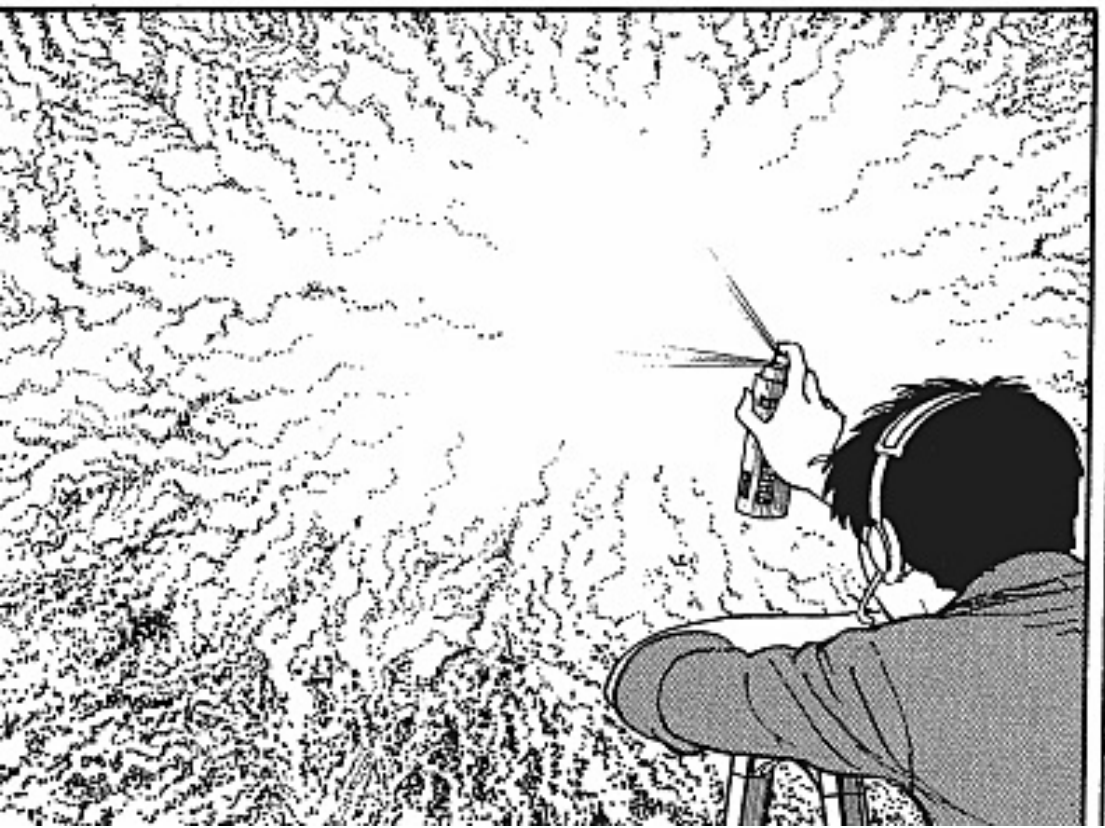
KOZEKI! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
OW!
AH! YOU'RE BLEEDING.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
WHAT ARE YOU ON ABOUT?!
I'M SORRY! JUST NOW, IT WAS LIKE—I HAD THIS WEIRD FEELING...
AT LEAST CLEAN IT!
YEAH. I WILL.
WITH THIS JOB, YOU'RE CONSTANTLY GETTING CUTS AND BRUISES. GUESS I'M USED TO IT NOW.
YEAH, I'M FINE. IT DOESN'T HURT.


PSSSHT
I RACED AROUND EVERY SINGLE DAY, FOLLOWING THE BOY'S INSTRUCTIONS...
...AND RUBBED EMPTY SPACE WITH NO ACTUAL FORM, SPRAYED PAIN-KILLERS.

AND SO MY STRANGE LIFE IN THIS HOUSE BEGAN.


EACH HARD DAY CONTINUED UNTIL HE FELL ASLEEP.
ON TOP OF THAT, HE WOULD COMPLAIN OF PAIN SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE NIGHT AS WELL, SO I COULDN'T SLEEP COMFORTABLY, EITHER.


IT HURTS. IT HURTS SO MUCH.
THE WORK TO EASE THE BOY'S PAIN, IF ONLY TEMPORARILY, WAS NEVER-ENDING.



PSSSHT
THIS IS EXHAUST-ING.
EXHAUST-ING AND POINT-LESS...

I FELT IT PRICKLING ON MY SKIN.
A KIND OF PAINFUL ATMO-SPHERE ...
...THAT PUT ME ON EDGE SOMEHOW.
THE THING THAT DEPRESSED ME EVEN MORE THAN THAT WAS THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE MANSION.
IT WAS BECAUSE I FELT THIS ATMO-SPHERE.
YES. MY MISTAKE THAT FIRST DAY...
...BUT I ALSO FEEL SENSATIONS AND PAIN MORE KEENLY THAN OTHERS.
I'M NOT AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE BOY...
SO, KOZEKI?
...RULED THE INTERIOR OF THE MANSION.
THIS STRANGE FEELING ...

Y-YES ...
I KNOW IT'S HARD, BUT PLEASE KEEP IT UP FOR MY SON'S SAKE.
GETTING USED TO THINGS HERE?
YES, I'M FINE...
I CAN'T EXACTLY GO TO THE DOCTOR WHEN MY SON IS SUFFERING.
THE CUT ON YOUR FOREHEAD HASN'T HEALED AT ALL.
SIR, YOU DON'T LOOK WELL. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
A FEW DAYS LATER, THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE DIED.
THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS SEPSIS. THE WOUND HE'D LEFT UNTENDED HAD FESTERED.

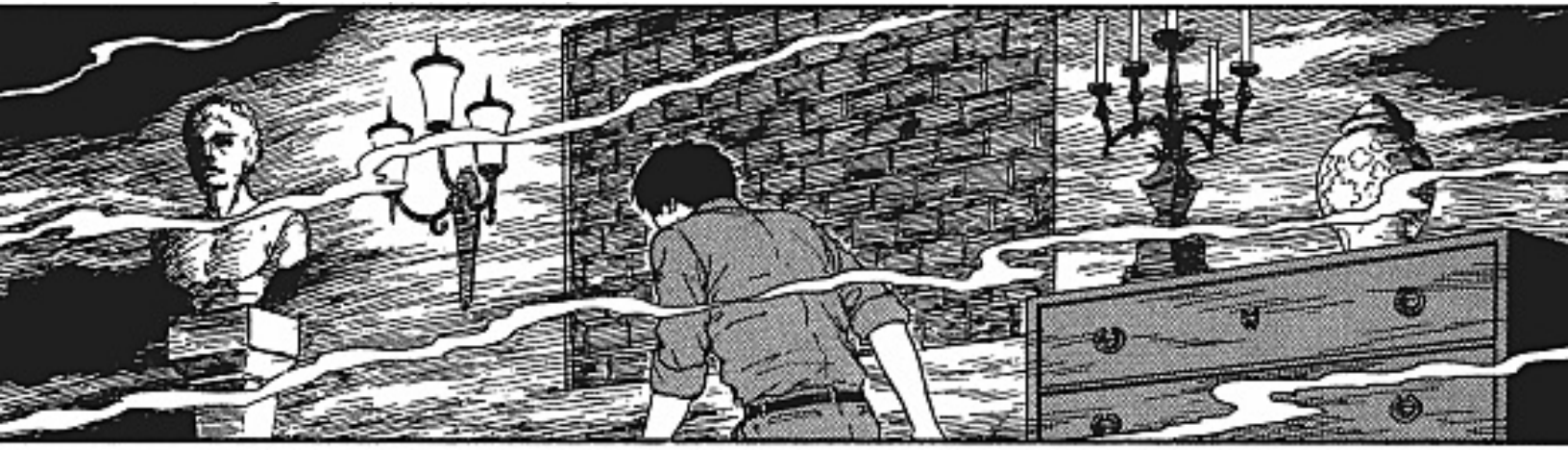
SOB SOB ...
ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR SALARY?
BUT...
YES, OF COURSE.
YOU WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF YUSUKE, WON'T YOU?
...I'LL GIVE YOU THE ENTIRE KAMISHIRO ESTATE!
WE'VE GOT MONEY. AND IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, IF WE FALL INTO ARREARS...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
YES. I'LL BEQUEATH EVERYTHING TO ANYONE WHO WILL STAY FOREVER!

KREE
THE INSIDE OF THE CLOSET IN THE PINE ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR HURTS.
IT HURTS... IT HURTS SO MUCH!
THAT REALLY HURTS!
OWWW!
BONK
ERR... WHERE DOES IT—
NGH!
Y-YEAH... WELL, I'VE ALWAYS HAD A LOW PAIN TOLERANCE.
BUT LATELY, IT'S MORE THAN THAT. IT'S LIKE I'VE GOTTEN SENSITIVE TO PAIN.
C'MON, KOZEKI, YOU'RE BEING DRAMATIC. YOU JUST BUMPED YOUR HEAD.
OWWW!

I MEAN, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
DOESN'T BOTHER ME A BIT.
THE REST OF US HAVE GOTTEN LESS SENSITIVE TO PAIN.
YOU'RE A WEIRD ONE.
WHY AREN'T YOU TAKING CARE OF THAT?!
HASHI-MOTO... THAT'S INFECTED!
ALL THE OTHER GUYS ARE THE SAME. MIZUNO'S ARM IS IN A REAL STATE.
HM? YEAH. BUT IT DOESN'T HURT, SO.
BUT IT'S STRANGE. WHY DOESN'T IT HURT...?
MAYBE THE BOY IS TAKING ON OUR PAIN, TOO?
HASHIMOTO! IT'S DANGEROUS TO KEEP IGNORING THIS!
I KNOW.

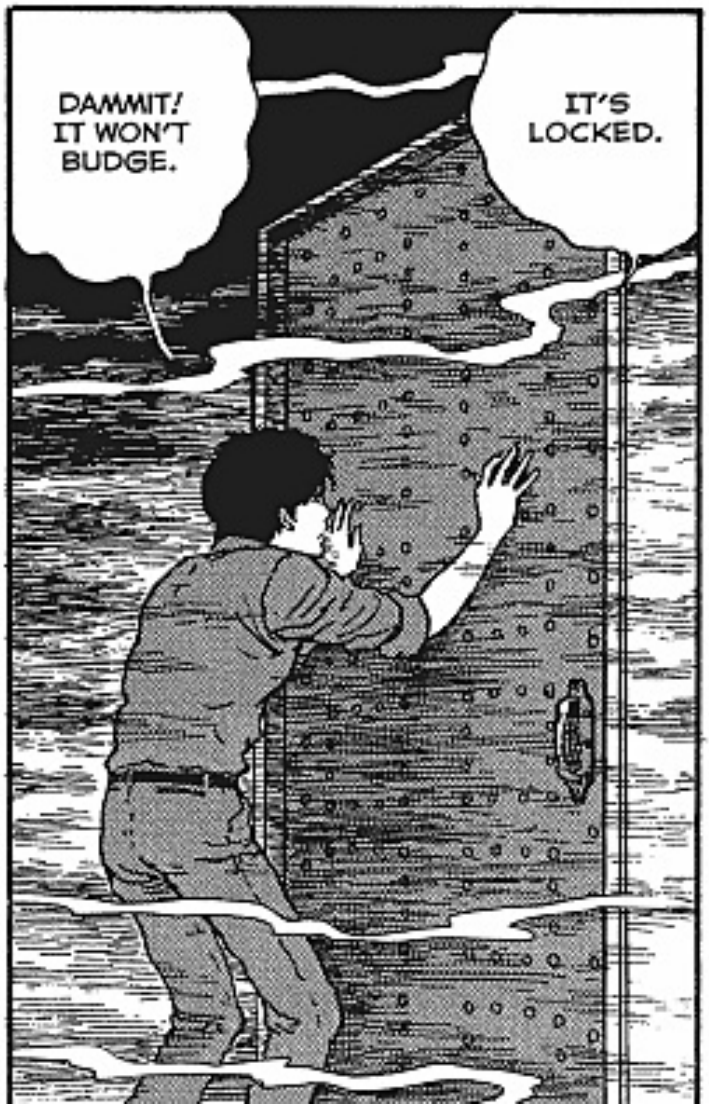
THERE'S BEEN THIS BAD SMELL LATELY.
THE ORIGIN OF THE SMELL WAS OBVIOUS.
THE INFECTIONS ARE PRETTY BAD...

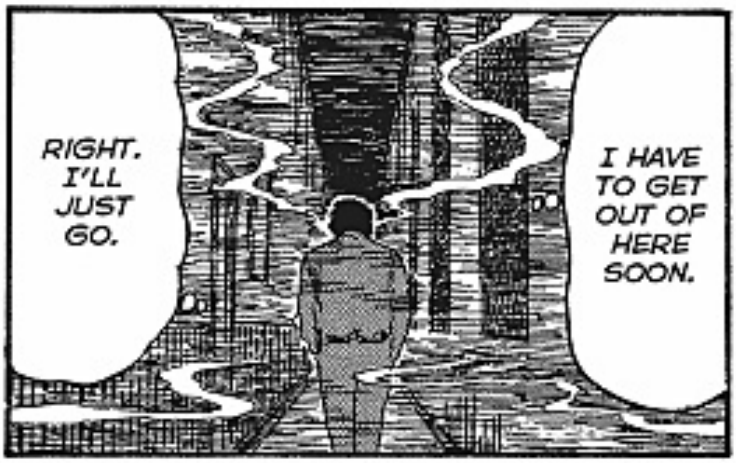
MIZUNO, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU...
...TO GO TO THE DOCTOR?
WE'RE FINE. AND WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO THE BOY IF WE STEP AWAY NOW?
EXACTLY. CAN YOU HANDLE IT BY YOURSELF IF WE ALL GO TO THE DOCTOR?
HUH? CAN YOU?!
N-NO, SHIMADA ...
BUT I JUST ...
MA'AM, YOU HAVE TO TALK TO THEM.
IF THIS KEEPS UP, EVERYONE WILL...
IT HURRRTS.
IT HURR-RRRTS.
BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YUSUKE? WHO'S GOING TO LOOK AFTER HIM...
...IF THEY END UP IN THE HOSPITAL ?

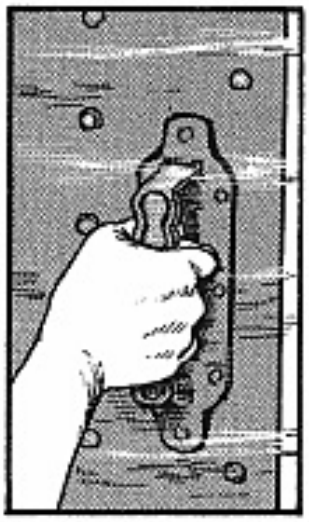


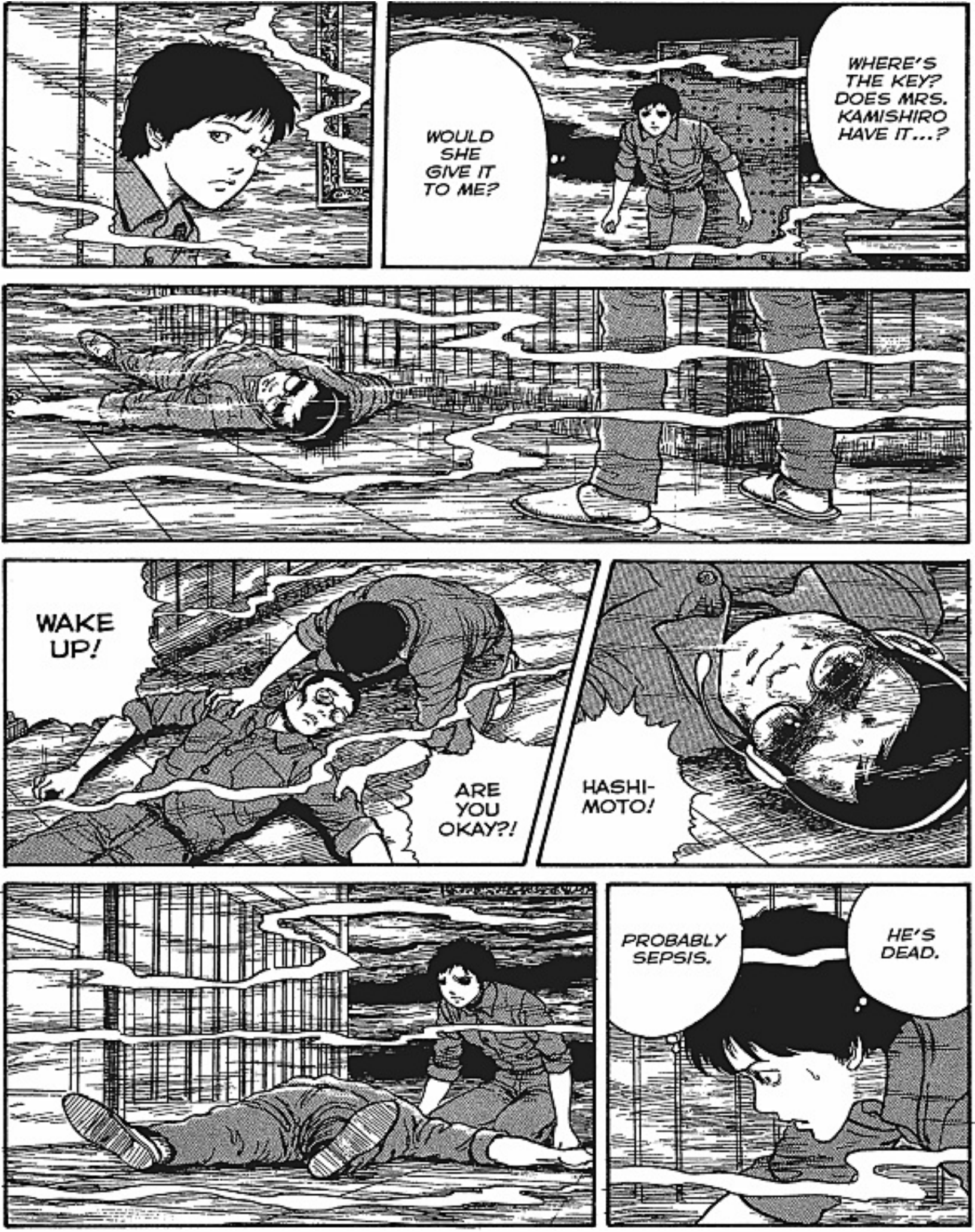
IT'S BECAUSE I'M IN THIS MANSION.
JUST BEING EXPOSED TO THE AIR MAKES ME ACHE.

I'M NOT MYSELF EITHER. EVERY PART OF ME HURTS AT THE SLIGHTEST LITTLE THING.
RIGHT. THIS IS NO TIME TO BE WORRYING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.


DAMMIT! IT WON'T BUDGE.
IT'S LOCKED.


RIGHT. I'LL JUST GO.
I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE SOON.




WOULD SHE GIVE IT TO ME?
WHERE'S THE KEY? DOES MRS. KAMISHIRO HAVE IT...?
WAKE UP!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
HASHI-MOTO!
PROBABLY SEPSIS.
HE'S DEAD.

WHAT ?!
TROUBLE, MIZUNO! SUGANUMA AND YAMASHITA COLLAPSED. THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE GONNA DIE ANY SECOND.
WHAT? HASHI-MOTO?
KOZEKI, YOU'RE THE NEW HAND HERE. YOU DON'T GET TO YELL LIKE THAT.
ERGH ...
YOU'LL DIE TOO IF YOU DON'T!
THAT'S WHAT I SAID! IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE. YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL!
TH-THAT'S—
THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT!
I GET IT. THEN YOU'LL HAVE THE FAMILY'S FORTUNE ALL TO YOURSELF.
YOU WANNA SEND US TO THE HOSPITAL THAT BAD?

HAAH.
HAAH.
BUT YAMASHITA STOPPED MOVING...
YEAH ...
SUGANUMA, ARE YOU OKAY?!
NO! I WON'T LET YOU USE THE PHONE!
I'M CALLING AN AMBULANCE!
STAY WITH ME.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU STOP TAKING CARE OF HIM?!
WELL, LOOK! YUSUKE IS SUFFERING!
IT HURTS. IT HURTS.
W-WHY NOT?!
NOR THE KEY TO THE FRONT DOOR, NATURALLY.
I'M USING THE PHONE.
THERE'S NO TALKING TO YOU.
I'M BEGGING YOU. DON'T ABANDON YUSUKE...
PLEASE ...
I-IS THIS REALLY THE TIME FOR THAT?!
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?!
W-WHAT ?!
YOU CAN'T. THE LINE'S BEEN CUT.

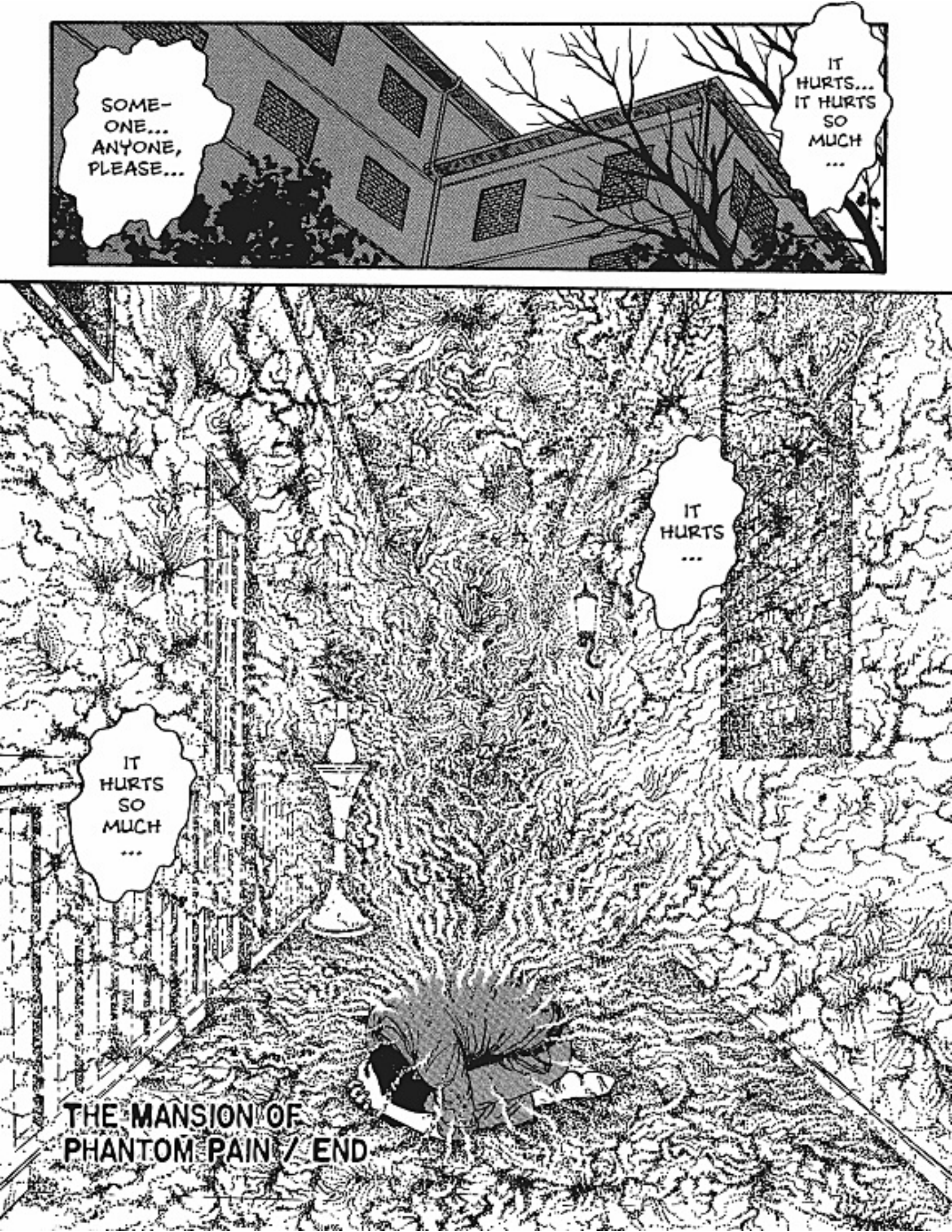
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
NGAA-AAH!!
MA'AM. WE'VE HAD ENOUGH.
WE'LL BE TAKING YOUR ESTATE NOW.
YOU AND YOUR SON ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DIE.
THE BOY WILL BE FREE OF HIS PAIN.
S-STOP. AT LEAST SPARE HIM—
AAAAAAH!

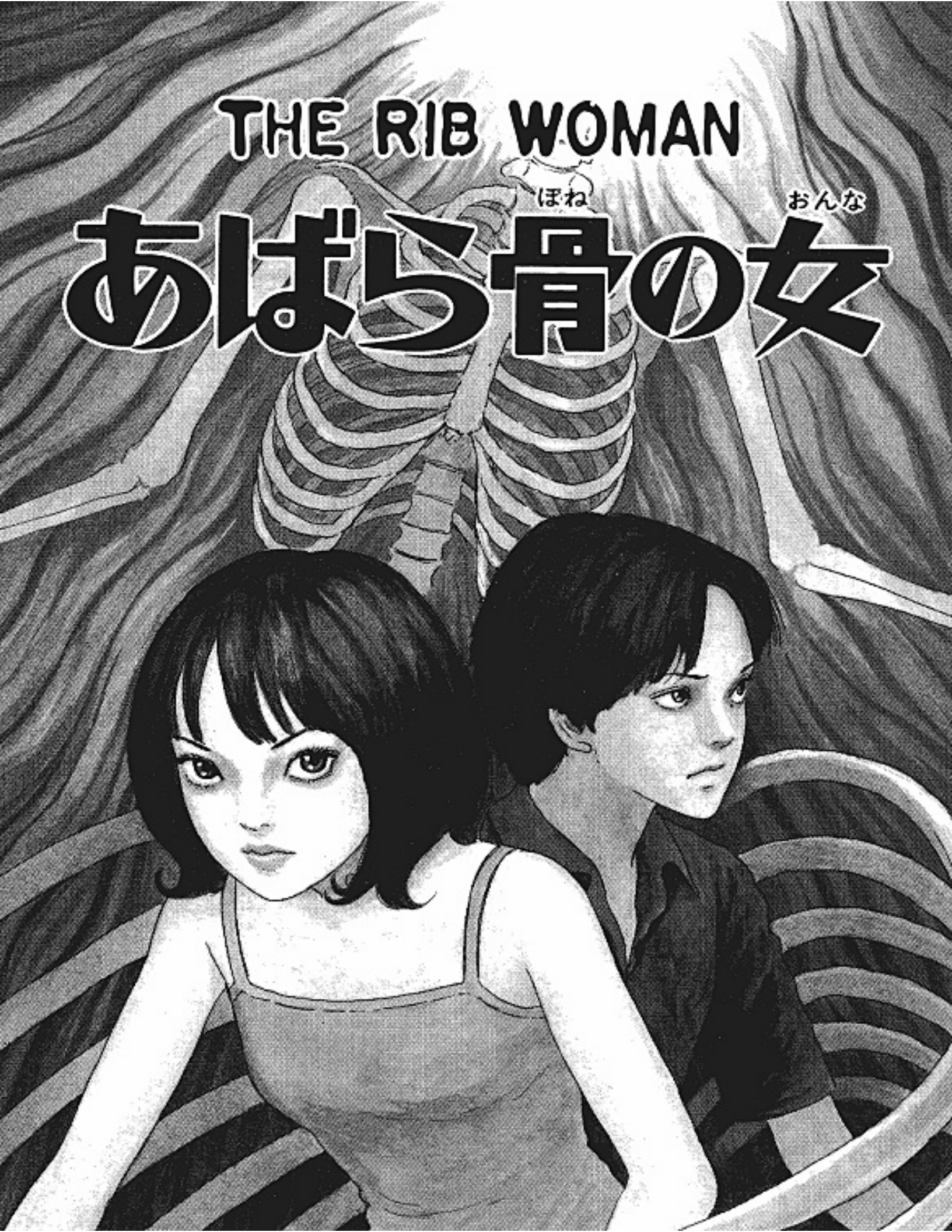
BE AT PEACE, BOY!!
HRR-NGH!
EEEAH!
HRR-RGHH!
HAAH HAAH... WE REALLY DID IT.
WHAT ABOUT KOZEKI?
WELL... WE'LL LET HIM LIVE FOR NOW.
WE'LL PIN IT ALL ON HIM.
GOOD IDEA...

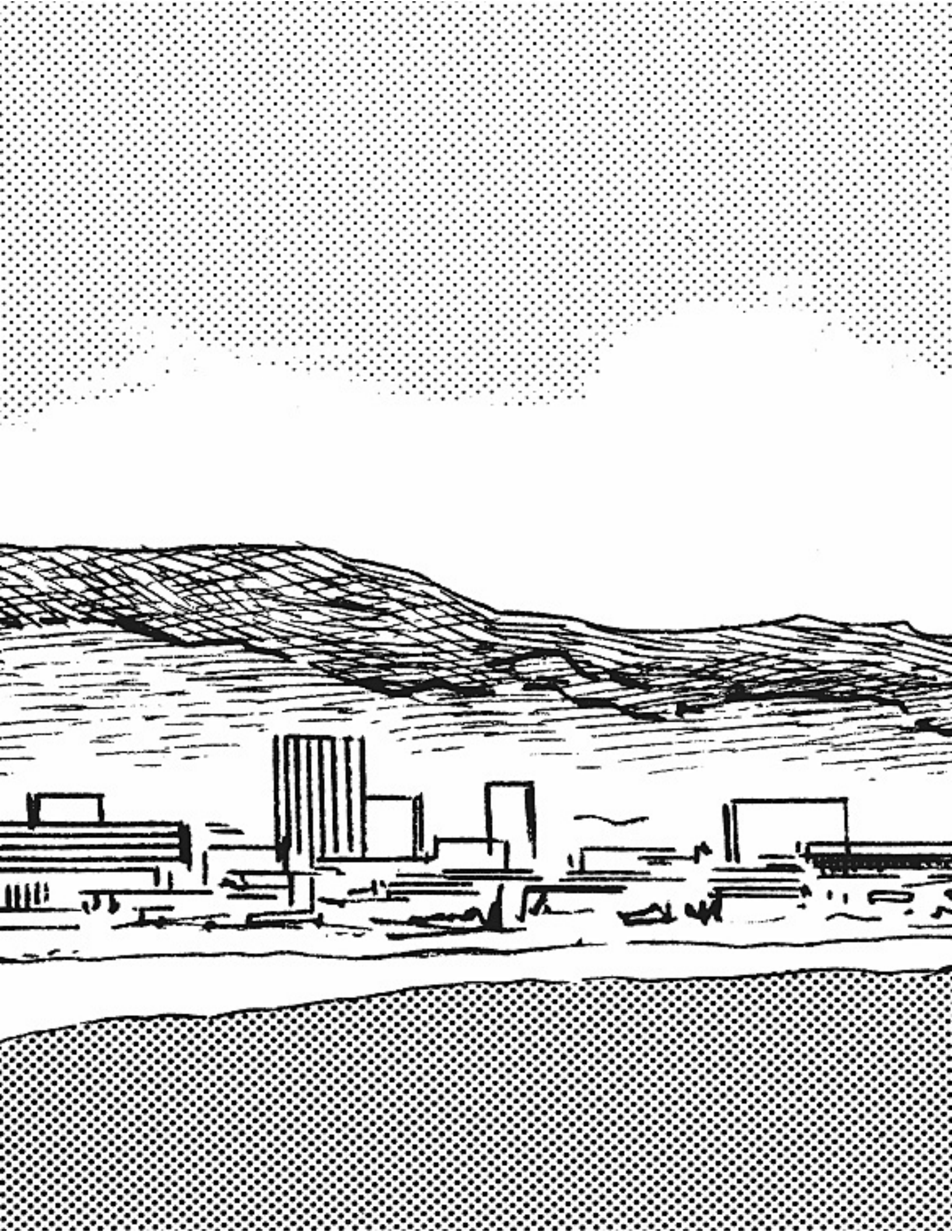
CAN'T USE THE PHONE, CAN'T FIND THE KEY. THOSE BRICKED-UP WINDOWS SHOW NO SIGN OF BREAKING...
DAMMIT. HOW MANY DAYS HAS IT BEEN? WE KEEP LOOKING, BUT THERE'S NO WAY OUT.
IT'S AMAZING WE'RE STILL ALIVE...
AND WE SMELL PRETTY BAD OURSELVES.
SUGANUMA AND YAMASHITA ARE BOTH DEAD, TOO. THAT'S THE STINK OF FIVE DEAD PEOPLE.
THIS SMELL IS REALLY TERRIBLE.
KOZEKI! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HEY, NOW THAT THE KID IS DEAD, MAYBE THE PAIN OR WHATEVER'S GONE FROM THIS HOUSE.

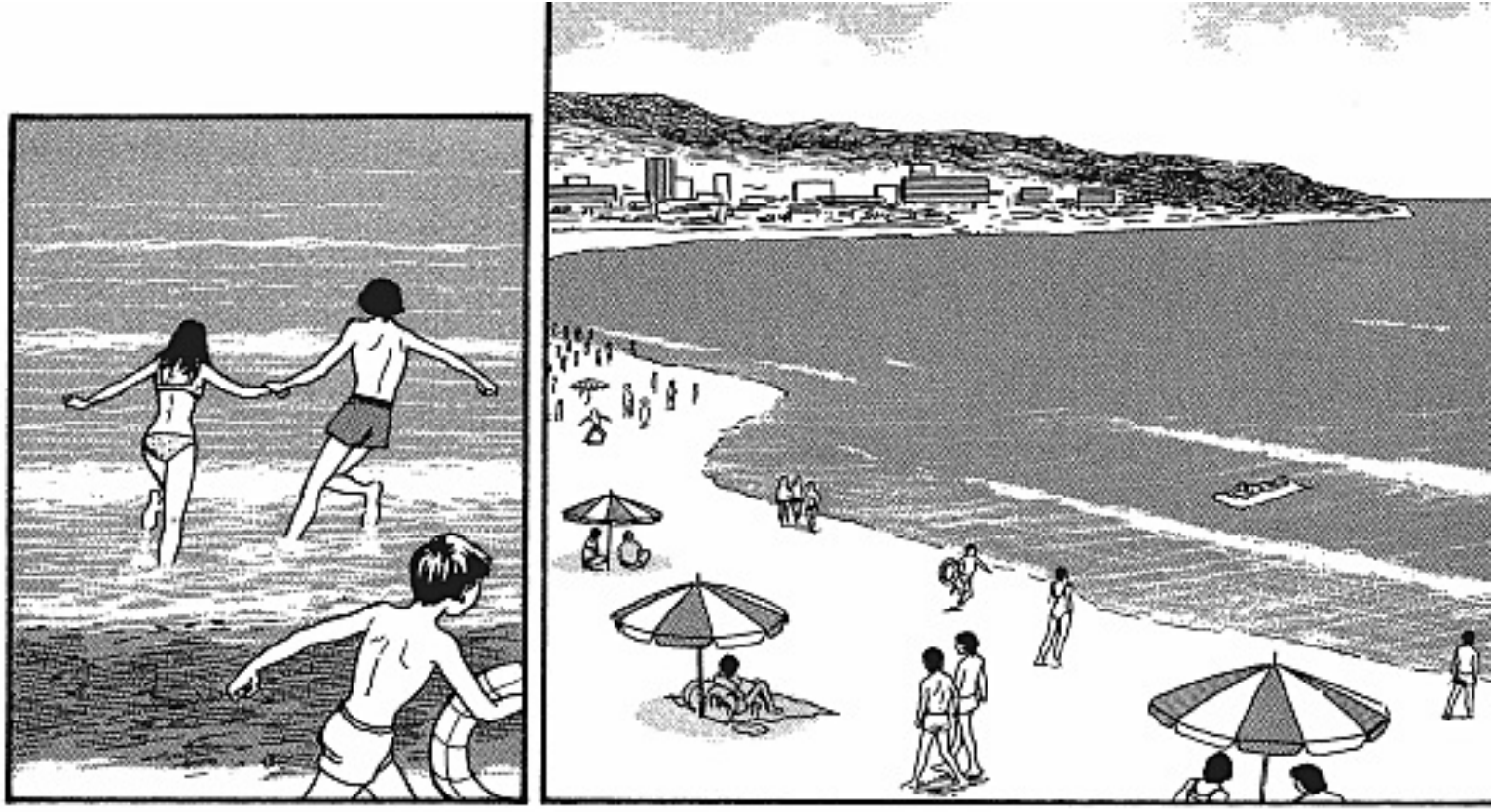
HE LOST HIS LIFE, BUT THE PAIN REMAINS. LIKE A PHANTOM PAIN...
NO... THE BOY'S PAIN IS STILL HERE.
I CAN FEEL IT. THE PAIN!
AND HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
HMPH.
MOST LIKELY... YOUR PAIN IS PART OF IT!
IT RUNS THROUGH EVERY PART OF THIS HOUSE. INCREDIBLE PAIN!
IT HURTS!
IT HURTS ...
UNNNH!
WHAT IF THE BOY'S SENSITIVITY TO PAIN ABSORBED EVEN THE PAIN OF OTHER PEOPLE?!

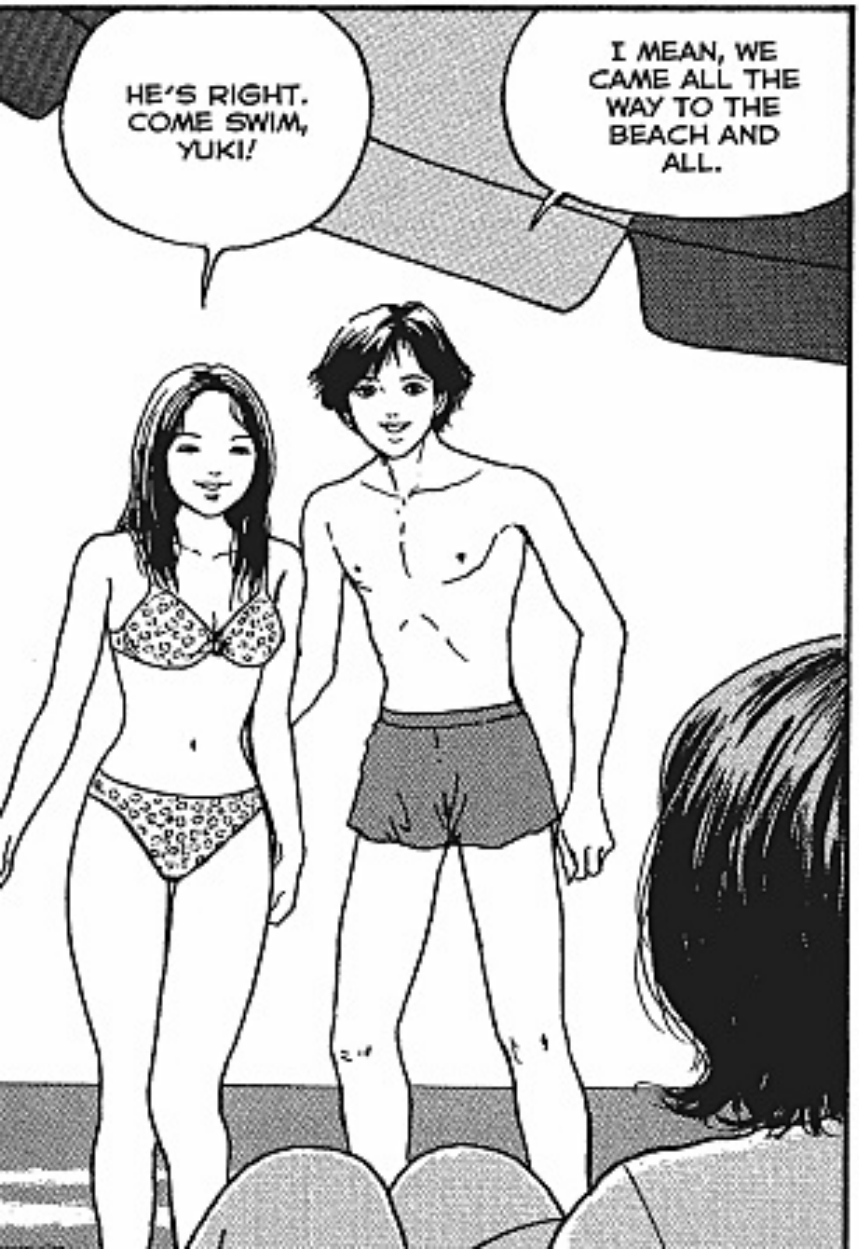
MIZUNO ...
...
...FINALLY LOST IT.
LOOK, KOZEKI'S ...
YUSUKE, IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU.
IS THERE ANY GREATER JOY?
DYING WITH NO SUFFER-ING.
HEH HEH HEH... A PEACE-FUL DEATH.
...DIE ...
...NOT GONNA ...
BUT... I'M... DEFI-NITELY ...
THUD
... HERE!


SOME-
ONE...
ANYONE,
PLEASE...
IT
HURTS...
IT HURTS
SO
MUCH
...
IT
HURTS
...
IT
HURTS
SO
MUCH
...
THE MANSION OF
PHANTOM PAIN / END

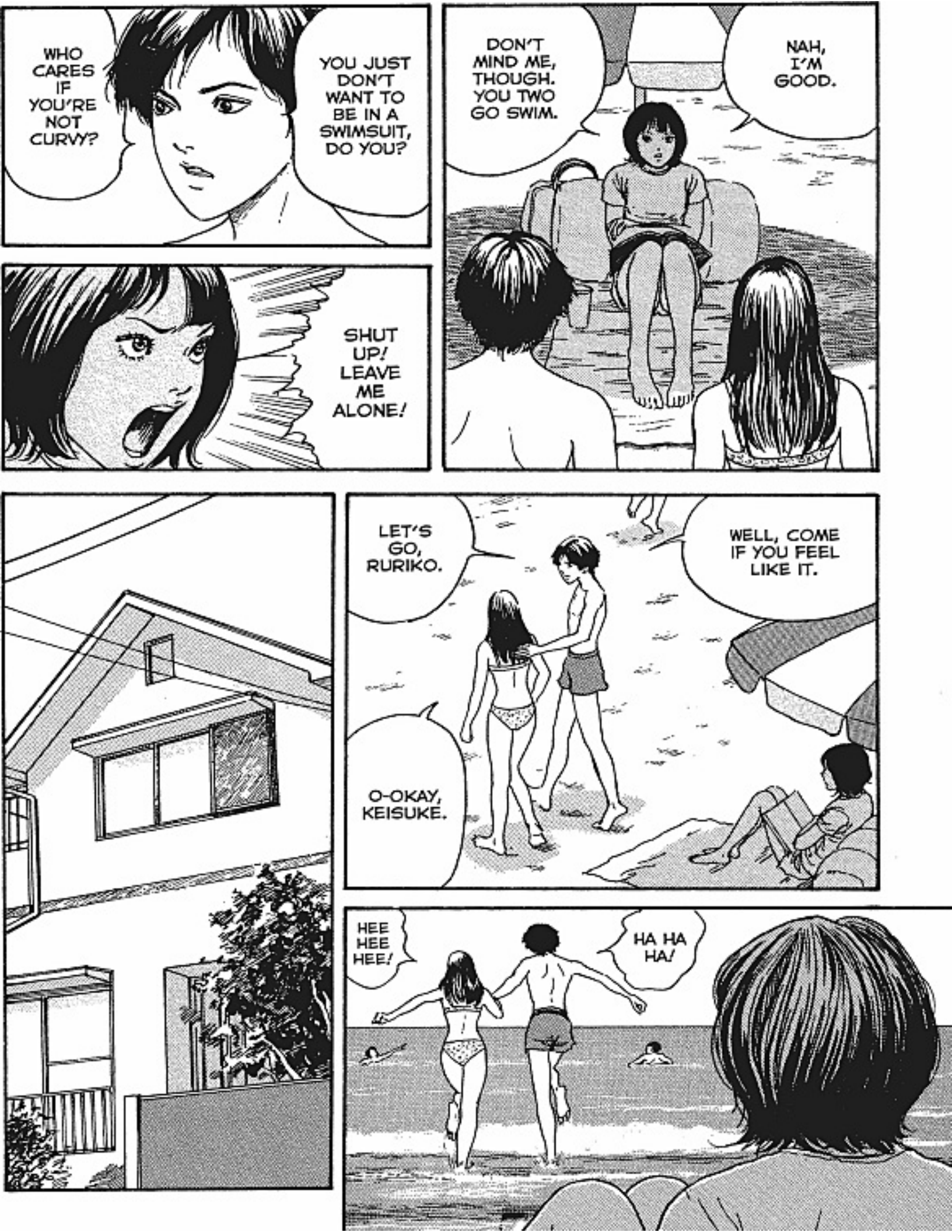

THE RIB WOMAN
あばら骨の女
ぼね
おんな

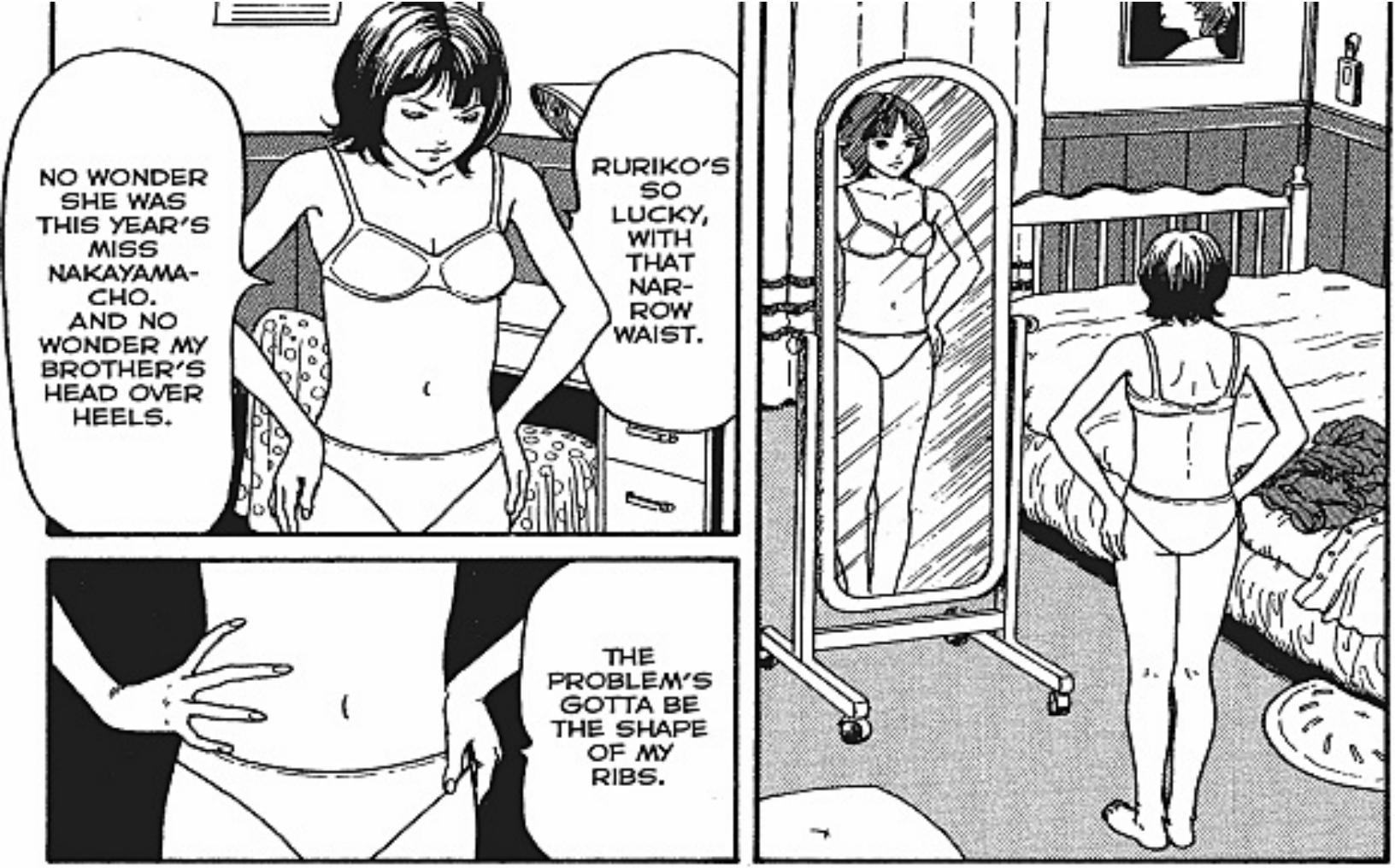


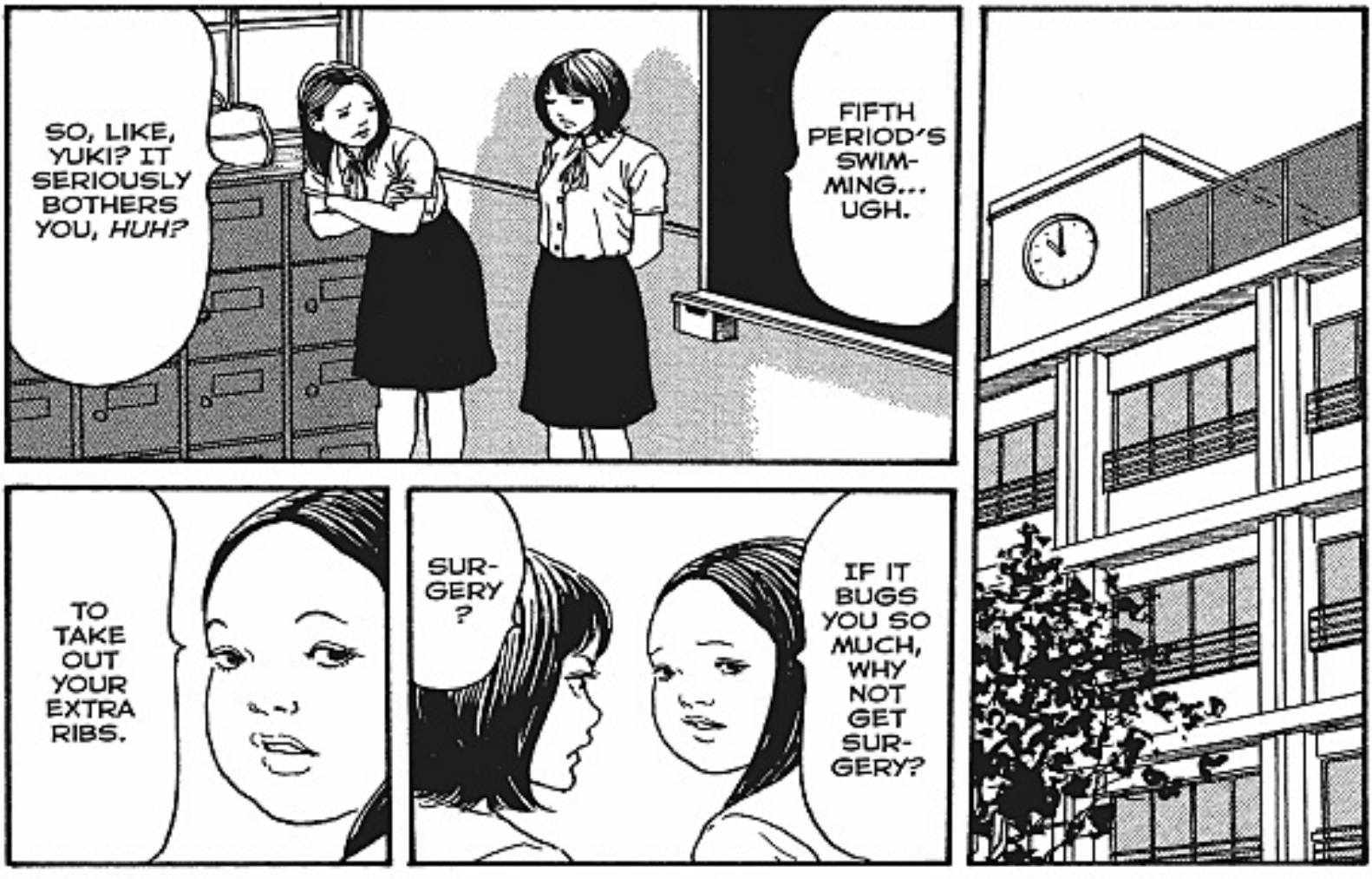


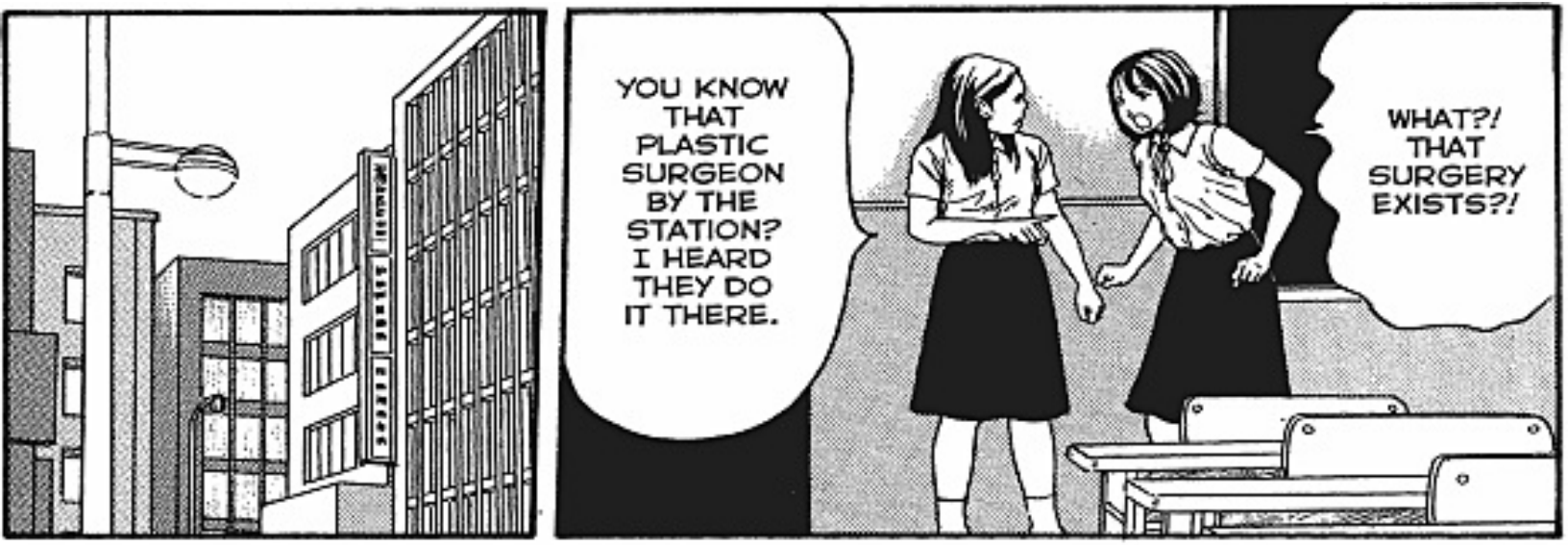

HE'S RIGHT. COME SWIM, YUKI!
I MEAN, WE CAME ALL THE WAY TO THE BEACH AND ALL.

HEY, YUKI! COME SWIM WITH US!


WHO CARES IF YOU'RE NOT CURVY?
YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BE IN A SWIMSUIT, DO YOU?
DON'T MIND ME, THOUGH. YOU TWO GO SWIM.
NAH, I'M GOOD.
SHUT UP! LEAVE ME ALONE!
LET'S GO, RURIKO.
WELL, COME IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT.
O-OKAY, KEISUKE.
HEE HEE HEE!
HA HA HA!

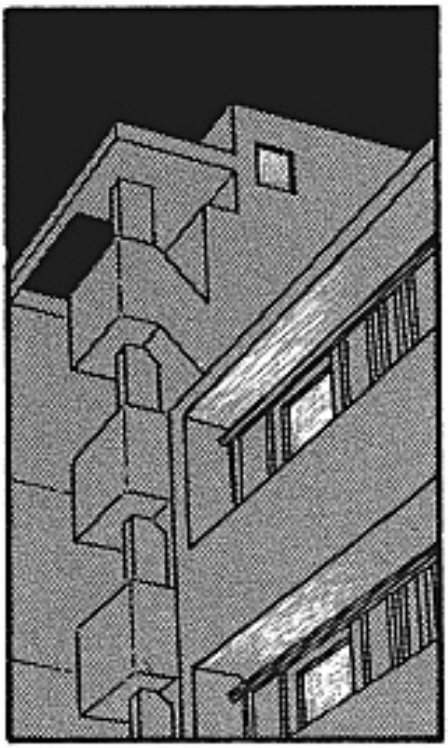

NO WONDER SHE WAS THIS YEAR'S MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO. AND NO WONDER MY BROTHER'S HEAD OVER HEELS.
RURIKO'S SO LUCKY, WITH THAT NAR-ROW WAIST.
THE PROBLEM'S GOTTA BE THE SHAPE OF MY RIBS.

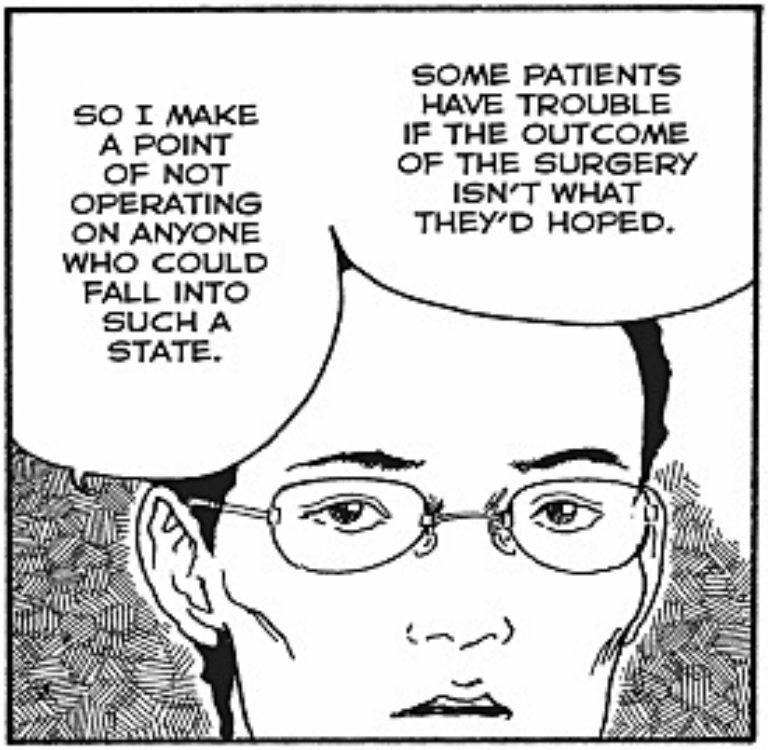

SO, LIKE, YUKI? IT SERIOUSLY BOTHERS YOU, *HUH?*
FIFTH PERIOD'S SWIM-MING... UGH.
TO TAKE OUT YOUR EXTRA RIBS.
SUR-GERY ?
IF IT BUGS YOU SO MUCH, WHY NOT GET SUR-GERY?


YOU KNOW THAT PLASTIC SURGEON BY THE STATION? I HEARD THEY DO IT THERE.
WHAT?! THAT SURGERY EXISTS?!

BUT—AND THIS GOES FOR OTHER SURGERIES AS WELL— I HAVE TO ASSESS YOUR PSY-CHOLOGICAL STATE FIRST.
I HAVE INDEED PERFORMED SEVERAL RIB REMOVALS.

KITAMURA COSMETIC SURGERY




SO I MAKE A POINT OF NOT OPERATING ON ANYONE WHO COULD FALL INTO SUCH A STATE.
SOME PATIENTS HAVE TROUBLE IF THE OUTCOME OF THE SURGERY ISN'T WHAT THEY'D HOPED.

PSYCHO-LOGICAL STATE?

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T DO IT.
IT IS KIND OF SCARY...
OH!
ARE YOU OKAY?
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
YOU CAN'T HEAR IT, YUKI?
WHAT MUSIC?
IT'S JUST AWFUL!
I WANT THAT MUSIC TO STOP!
RURIKO, IS THAT YOU?
WHAT'S WRONG ?!

IT JUST DIGS INTO MY SOUL.
SUCH AN UGLY SOUND, THE MELODY IS SO CREEPY.
THIS MUSIC...
LATELY... I HEAR IT WHEN IT GETS QUIET AT NIGHT.
PALUNG PALUNG
...
REALLY LISTEN...
LISTEN... CAN YOU HEAR IT?
PALUNG PALUNG
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...KIND OF...
RIGHT?! YOU CAN HEAR IT, RIGHT?!
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOONG
PALOOOONG
PALOOOOONG

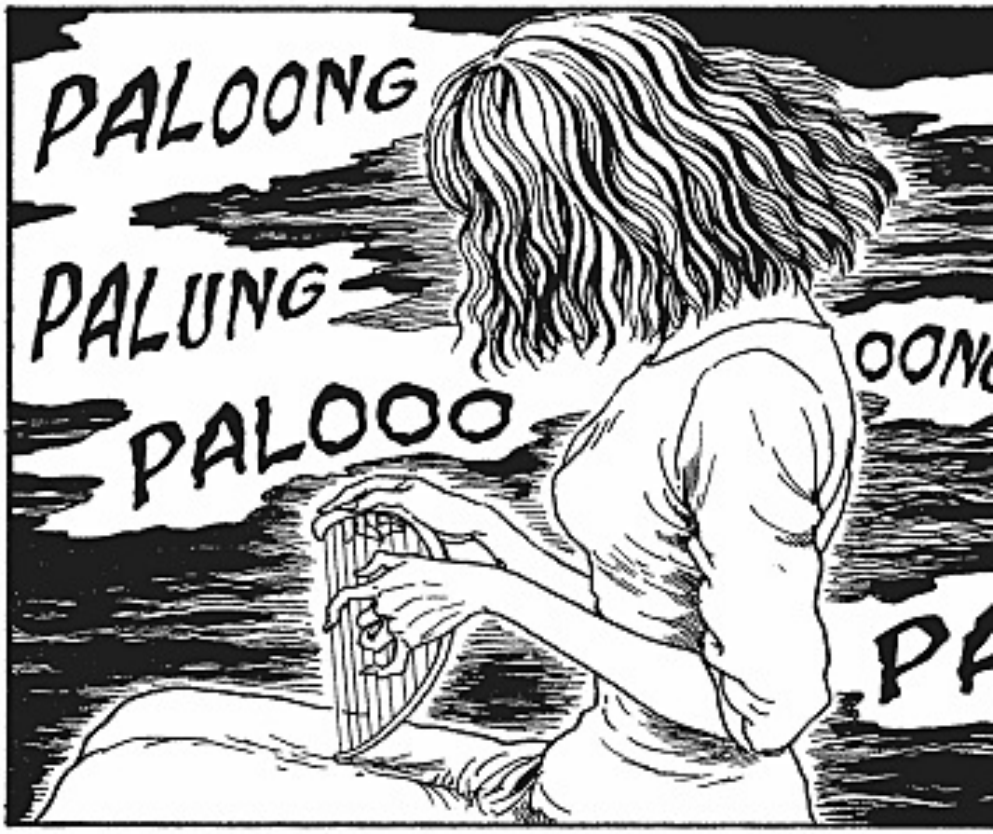
I CAN HEAR IT SO CLEARLY. A STRINGED INSTRUMENT.
YEAH. I COULD KIND OF HEAR IT, TOO.
WEIRD MUSIC?
AND IT JUST REPEATS THE SAME SHORT PHRASE OVER AND OVER.
NO... IT'S NOT A GUITAR. IT SOUNDS GLOOMIER.
AND IT WASN'T JUST THE WIND BRINGING YOU ME PLAYING MY GUITAR BADLY?
HOW ABOUT WE GO TO YOUR HOUSE AND CHECK INTO IT, RURIKO?
HUH. I'M CURIOUS NOW.
LAST NIGHT, I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE, SO I WENT LOOKING FOR THE SOURCE.
I HEAR IT COMING FROM SOMEWHERE EVERY NIGHT. I ACT ALL HAPPY WITH YOU AND YUKI, BUT...

THIS IS THE TIME I USUALLY START HEARING IT.
PALUNG
PALOONG PALUNG
...
PALUNG
PALOONG
ANYWAY... LET'S TRY TO FIND WHERE IT'S COMING FROM.
WHAT? I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I CAN KIND OF...
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOONG
PA
PALOONG
AAAH! I CAN HEAR IT!

PALOOONG
PALUNG
PALUNG
PALOOONG
HMM. I FEEL LIKE I CAN MAYBE HEAR IT? OR MAYBE NOT?
PALOOONG
THE SOUND'S GETTING CLEARER.
I CAN DEFINITELY HEAR IT.
PALUNG
PALOONG
I HEAR IT...
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOOOONG
PALOOONG
PALUNG
IT'S COMING FROM THE PARK...
AAAH, WHAT AN AWFUL SOUND. SO UPSETTING.
IT'S JUST CREEPY.
PALOONG

PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOONG

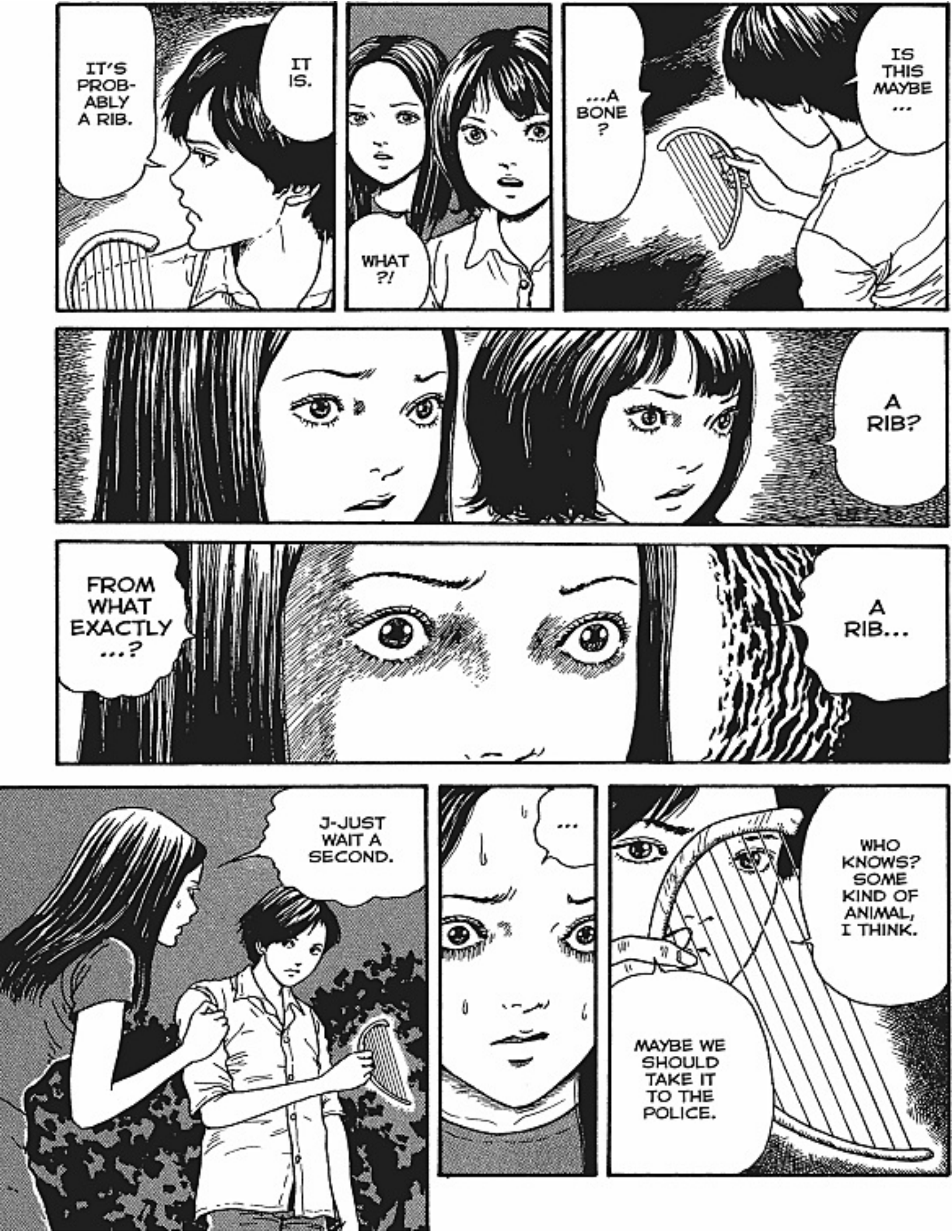
PALUNG


PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOOO

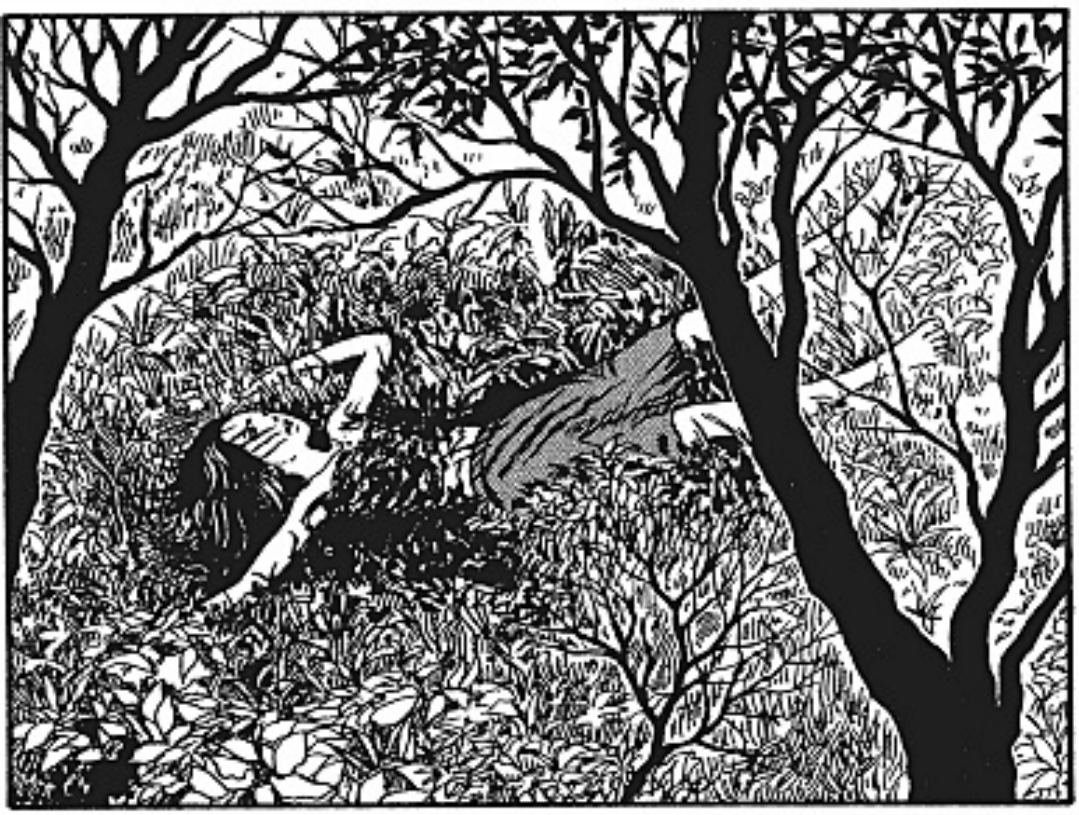
AAAH!
STOP!

KLAK
STOP!
H-HEY! WAIT...
AH!
SHE'S GONE...
HUH?

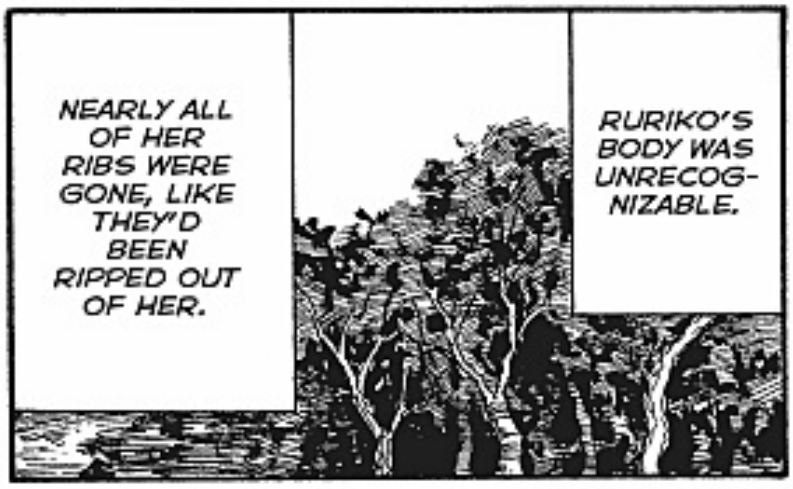
ズーン
ズーン
ズーン
ズーン
...
WAS SHE PLAYING THIS?
NO.
OF COURSE NOT. YOU CAN'T MAKE ANY SOUND WITH THIS.
WEIRD... IT'S NOT MAKING THAT CREEPY SOUND.
YEAH. THAT'S THE WEIRD PART.
BUT THAT WOMAN WAS DEFINITELY MAKING SOUND WITH IT.
A SOUND BOX. ON A GUITAR, IT'S THE BODY.
THIS KIND OF INSTRUMENT NEEDS A PART FOR THE SOUND TO RESONATE.
AND... THE MATERIAL OF THE BOW HERE...
THIS THING DOESN'T HAVE ONE.


IT'S PROB-ABLY A RIB.
IT IS.
WHAT ?!
...A BONE ?
IS THIS MAYBE ...
A RIB?
FROM WHAT EXACTLY ...?
A RIB...
J-JUST WAIT A SECOND.
...
WHO KNOWS? SOME KIND OF ANIMAL, I THINK.
MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE IT TO THE POLICE.

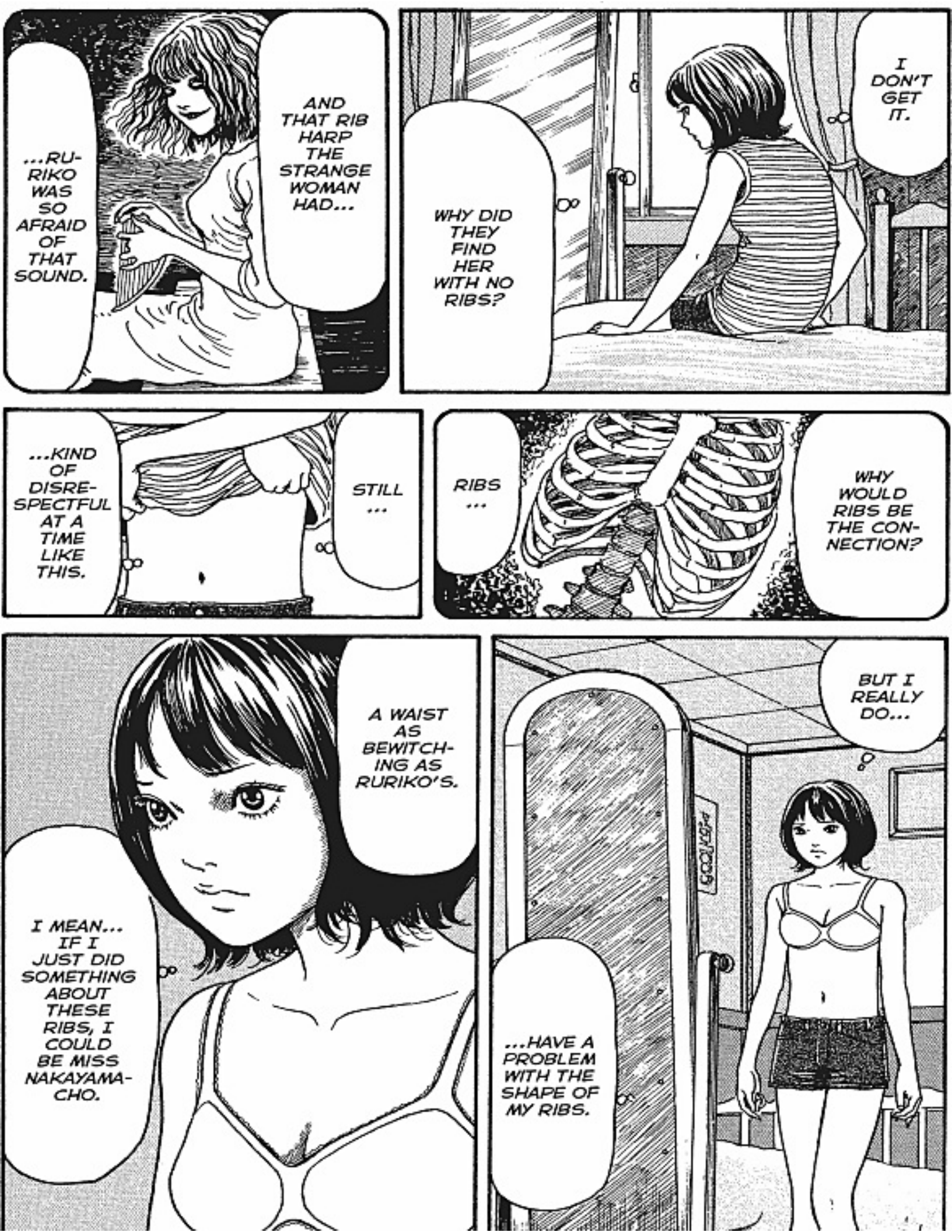
KOAKU KOAKU
GIVE ME THAT THING.
THE POLICE? THAT'S A BIT MUCH.
...
HAAH.
HAAH.
TOSS
MY BROTHER AND I REPORTED TO THE POLICE WHAT HAD HAPPENED BEFORE HER DISAPPEARANCE.
BUT THEY COULDN'T FIND ANY LEADS ON THAT STRANGE WOMAN.
THE DISAP-PEARANCE OF MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO INSTANTLY BECAME THE TALK OF THE TOWN.
NOT LONG AFTER THAT, RURIKO WENT MISSING.



AND THEN ...
WHOA! A BODY. THERE'S A DEAD WOMAN HERE!


NEARLY ALL OF HER RIBS WERE GONE, LIKE THEY'D BEEN RIPPED OUT OF HER.
RURIKO'S BODY WAS UNRECOG-NIZABLE.

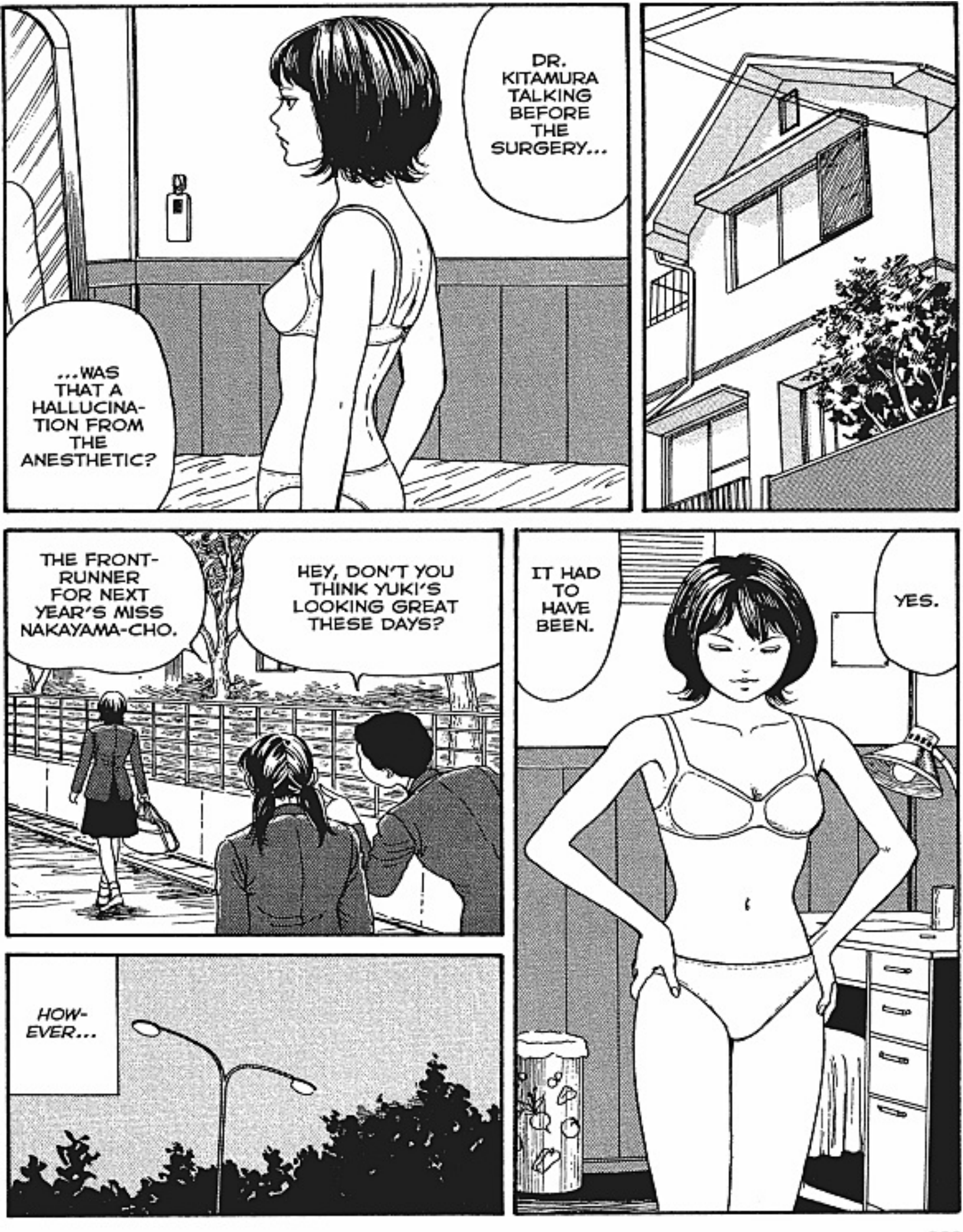
KEISUKE ...


...RU-RIKO WAS SO AFRAID OF THAT SOUND.
AND THAT RIB HARP THE STRANGE WOMAN HAD...
WHY DID THEY FIND HER WITH NO RIBS?
I DON'T GET IT.
...KIND OF DISRE-SPECTFUL AT A TIME LIKE THIS.
STILL ...
RIBS ...
WHY WOULD RIBS BE THE CON-NECTION?
I MEAN... IF I JUST DID SOMETHING ABOUT THESE RIBS, I COULD BE MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO.
A WAIST AS BEWITCH-ING AS RURIKO'S.
...HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE SHAPE OF MY RIBS.
BUT I REALLY DO...

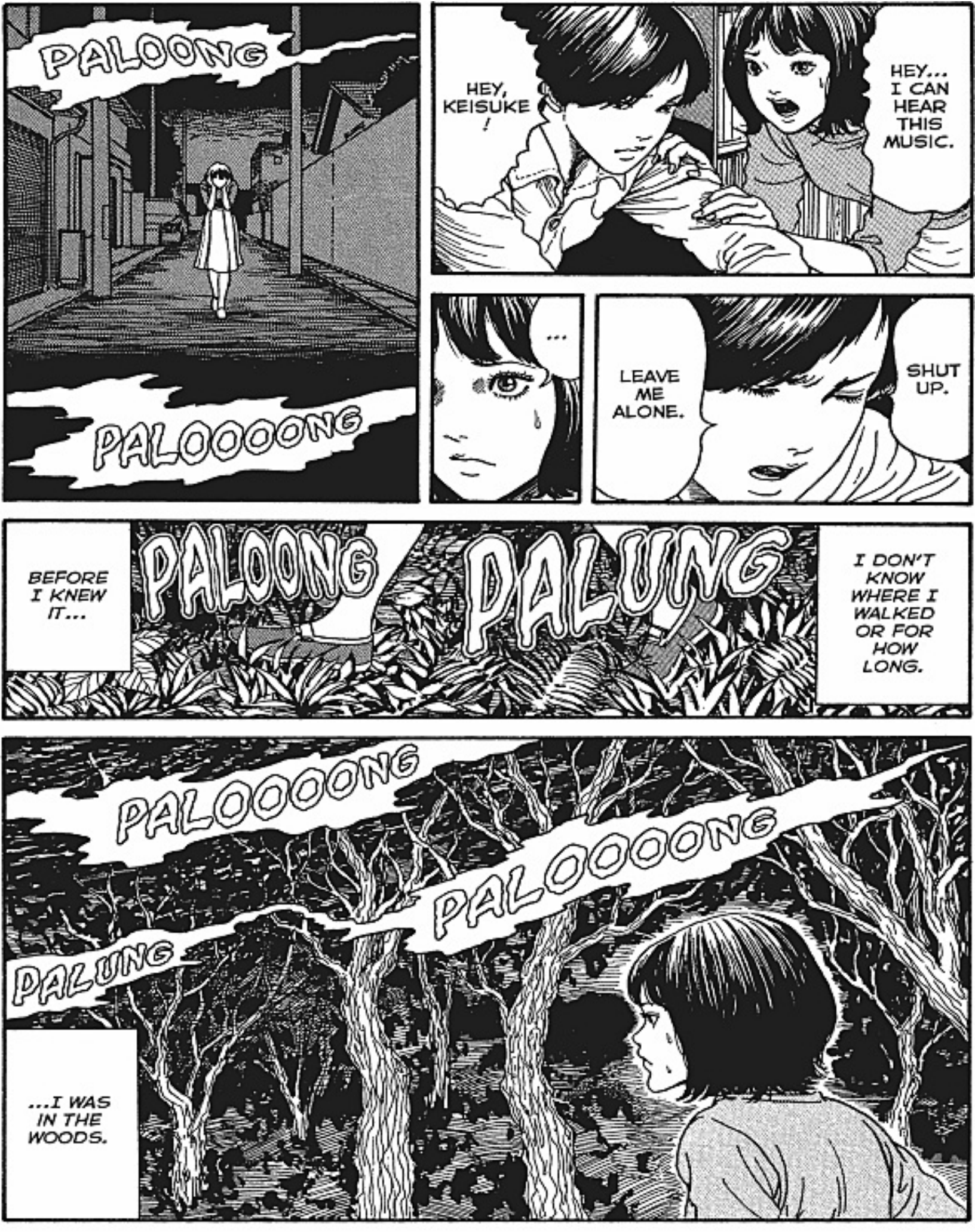
I'D RATHER NOT TELL THEM. IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
NO...
DOES YOUR FAMILY KNOW ABOUT THIS?
PLEASE COME TO THE OPERATING THEATER.
THERE SEEM TO BE NO PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES, EITHER.
...IT'S FINE.
YES, WELL ...

I DID TWO BEFORE YOU.
YOU'LL BE THE THIRD PERSON I'VE PERFORMED THIS SURGERY ON.
IT WILL TAKE A FEW MINUTES FOR THE ANESTHETIC TO START WORKING.
...
...IT WAS ACTUALLY RURIKO SHIMADA, WHOSE RAVAGED BODY THEY FOUND THE OTHER DAY.
THE SECOND— THAT IS, THE ONE BEFORE YOU...
I ALSO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOT SEEING THAT.
SHE HAD PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES.
SHE WASN'T PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS. SHE HAD A HARD TIME OF IT.
BUT THE VERY FIRST WOMAN WAS DIFFICULT.
THE SURGERY WENT EXTREMELY WELL. SHE EVEN BECAME MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO.

SHE WANTED ME TO TAKE OUT MORE RIBS.
SHE SAID IF I TOOK OUT ANOTHER ONE ON EACH SIDE, SHE WOULD FEEL BETTER.
EVENTUALLY, SHE CAME ASKING ME FOR FURTHER SURGERY.
BUT I WAS INEXPERIENCED AS A DOCTOR THEN. SO I AGREED TO HER REQUEST.
OVER AND OVER.
AS LONG AS THAT ISSUE REMAINS THE OUTCOME WILL BE THE SAME.
BUT WITH PATIENTS LIKE THIS, THE ISSUE ISN'T PHYSICAL, IT'S PSYCHO-LOGICAL.
BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
HONESTLY! I EXASPERATE EVEN MYSELF.
YES... I ENDED UP TAKING NEARLY ALL OF HER RIBS OUT!
AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED?


DR. KITAMURA TALKING BEFORE THE SURGERY...
...WAS THAT A HALLUCINA-TION FROM THE ANESTHETIC?
THE FRONT-RUNNER FOR NEXT YEAR'S MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO.
HEY, DON'T YOU THINK YUKI'S LOOKING GREAT THESE DAYS?
IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN.
YES.
HOW-EVER...

PALUNG
PALOOONG
PALUNG
PALUNG
PALUNG
I FEEL LIKE THE MELODY AND SOUND ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM THE MUSIC RURIKO WAS SO SCARED OF.
BUT IT'S INCRED-IBLY DIS-TURBING.
PALUNG
IT'S BEEN EVERY NIGHT SINCE I HAD THE SURGERY.
AAH, I CAN HEAR IT AGAIN TONIGHT.
PALUNG
PALUNG
IT ECHOES IN THE SCARS FROM MY SURGERY.
PALOOONG
PALUNG
AND NOW... I FEEL IT IN MY CHEST IN THIS WEIRD WAY.
KEISUKE...
PALOONG
KEISUKE !
KEISUKE ...
PALOOOONG
I...I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANY-MORE...
PALOONG


PALOONG
PALOOOOONG
HEY, KEISUKE!
HEY... I CAN HEAR THIS MUSIC.
...
LEAVE ME ALONE.
SHUT UP.
BEFORE I KNEW IT...
PALOONG
PALUNG
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WALKED OR FOR HOW LONG.
PALOOOOONG
PALUNG
PALOOOOONG
...I WAS IN THE WOODS.

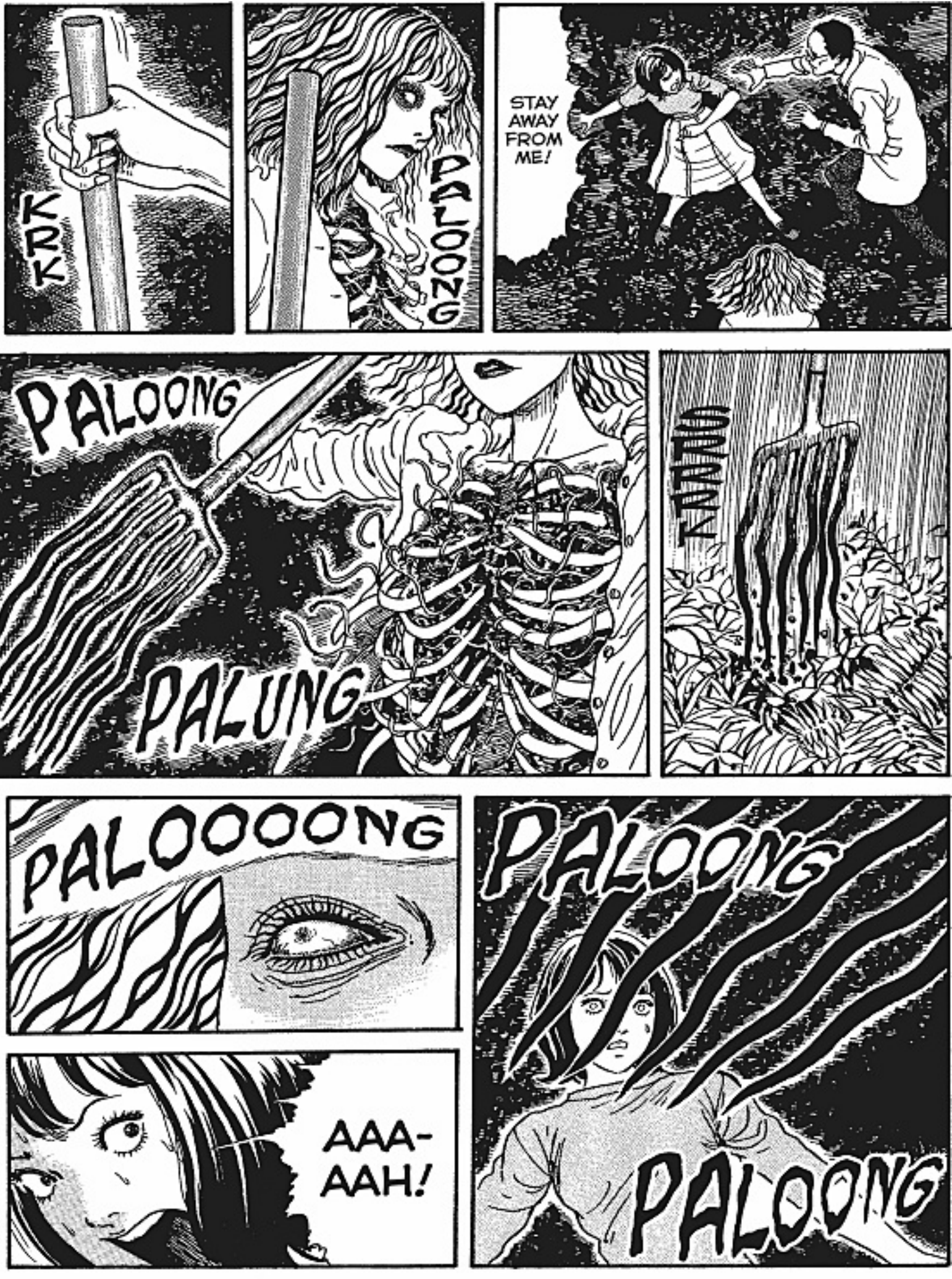
PALOONG
KRSH
KRSH
PALOOOOOONG
THE SOUND'S GETTING CLOSER...
IT'S THAT WOMAN... SHE'S CLOSE.
PALOOOONG
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOOOOOOONG

PALUNG
PALOONG
PALOOOOONG
WH-WHO ON EARTH ARE YOU?!
PALUNG
AAAH!
HEH HEH HEH HEH!
PALUNG
PALUNG

PALOONG PALOONG
IT RESONATES WITH YOUR RIBS.
I *DID* MAKE IT OUT OF YOUR RIB, AFTER ALL. ONE OF THE RIBS YOU HAD REMOVED.
HERE. YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK.
PALUNG
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALUNG
IT'S STILL ...
I CAN STILL HEAR IT...
YES.
MY CHEST IS WHAT'S REALLY MAKING THE SOUND.
PALUNG
THE DOCTOR PUT IN ALL THESE WIRES IN PLACE OF THE RIBS HE TOOK OUT.
PALUNG
THANKS TO THAT, WHENEVER I BREATHE OR MOVE, THE WIRES CATCH ON EACH OTHER AND PLAY A LITTLE TUNE.
PALUNG
PALOONG
I'LL SHOW YOU.

PALUNG
PALOONG

ON TOP OF THAT, THE WOUNDS ARE INFECTED AND EVERYTHING'S POPPING RIGHT OUT OF MY SKIN.
HM, DOCTOR ?
THAT DOCTOR REALLY IS TERRIBLE, THOUGH.
I HAD MISS NAKAYAMA-CHO'S RIBS IMPLANTED, BUT THEY GOT ALL MIXED UP WITH THE WIRES, AND NOW IT'S A MESS.
PALOONG
DR. KITA-MURA !
AH!
I WILL...
I-I UNDER-STAND ...
PLEASE TRANSPLANT HER BEAUTIFUL RIBS INTO ME.
DOCTOR, THIS TIME... THIS TIME FOR SURE, PLEASE MAKE THE OPERATION A SUCCESS.
PANOOZG


KRK
PALOONG
STAY AWAY FROM ME!
PALOONG
PALUNG
PALOOOONG
PALOONG
PALOONG
AAA-AAH!

PALOONG
PALOONG
PALOONG
AAAH
GRAB
KRNCH
AAAH!
PALOONG
HO HO HO!
PALOONG

THE RIB WOMAN / END

リアルウンコ ノオモイデ
MEMORIES OF REAL POOP

In among the booths on the shrine grounds...

It was at a fall festival when I was still a boy.

YAKISOBA

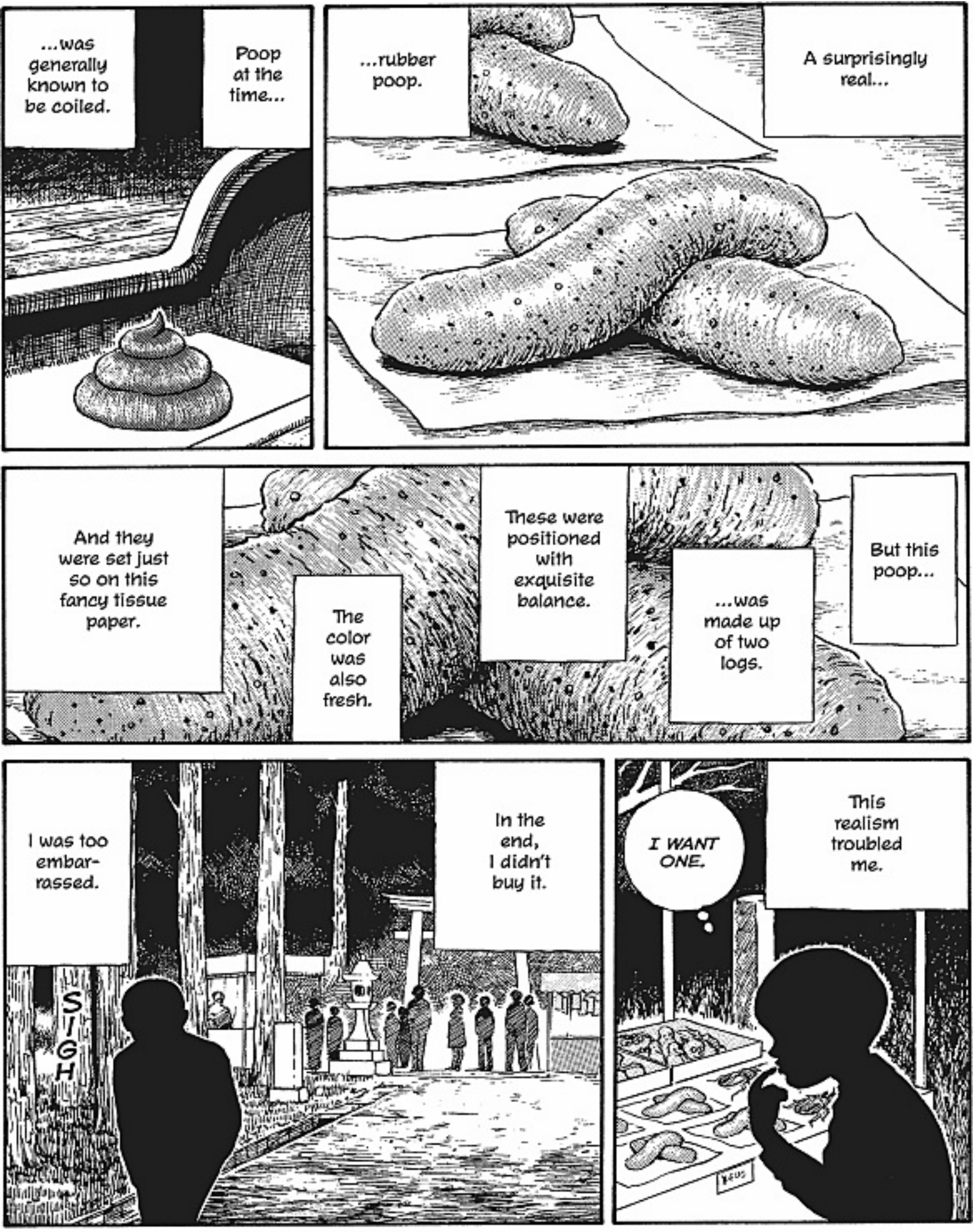
CANDY APPLES

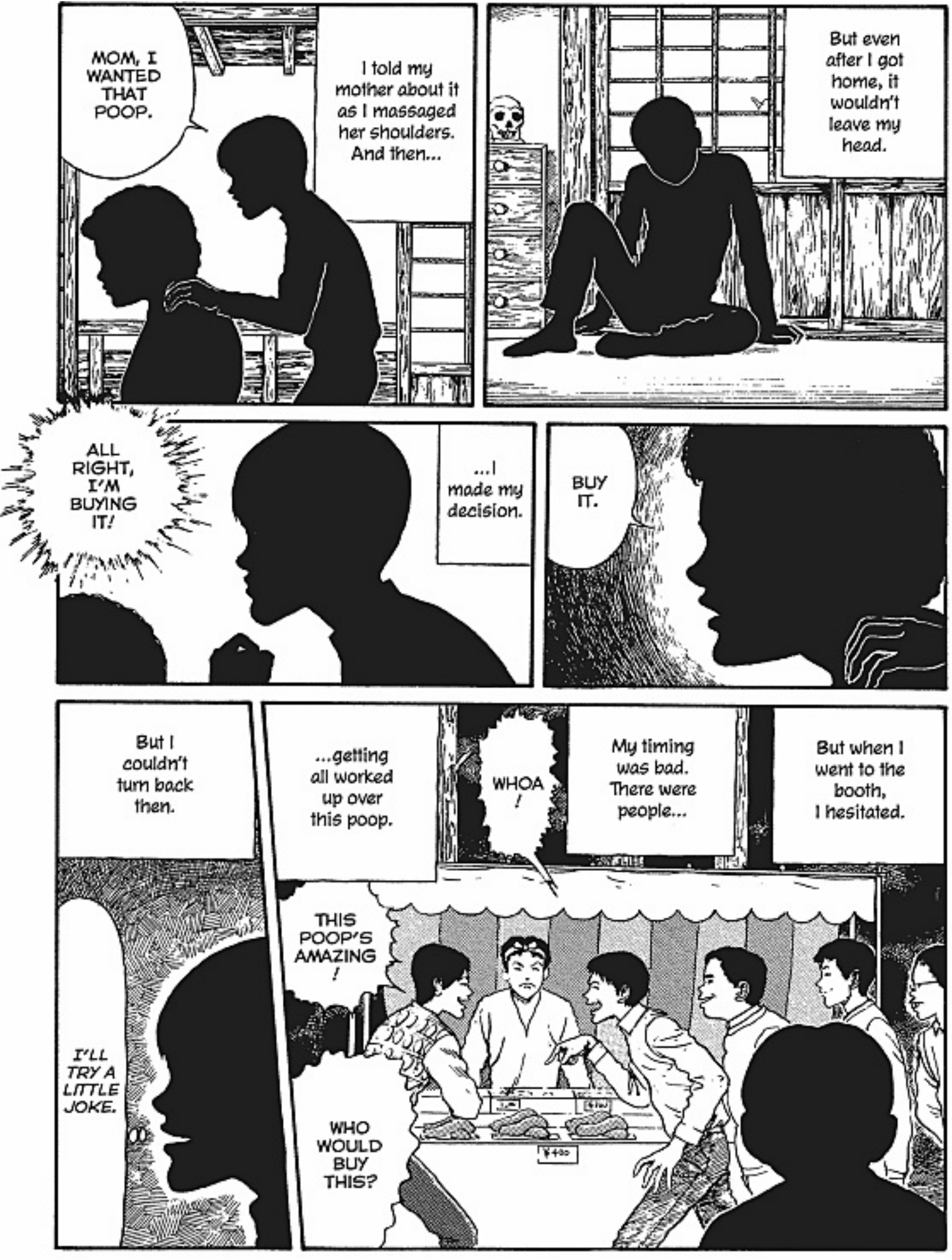
¥200

¥300

¥400

...I discovered something unbelievable.


...was generally known to be coiled.
Poop at the time...
...rubber poop.
A surprisingly real...
And they were set just so on this fancy tissue paper.
The color was also fresh.
These were positioned with exquisite balance.
...was made up of two logs.
But this poop...
I was too embarrassed.
SIGH
In the end, I didn't buy it.
I WANT ONE.
This realism troubled me.


MOM, I WANTED THAT POOP.
I told my mother about it as I massaged her shoulders. And then...
But even after I got home, it wouldn't leave my head.
ALL RIGHT, I'M BUYING IT!
...I made my decision.
BUY IT.
But I couldn't turn back then.
...getting all worked up over this poop.
WHOA!
My timing was bad. There were people...
But when I went to the booth, I hesitated.
I'LL TRY A LITTLE JOKE.
THIS POOP'S AMAZING!
WHO WOULD BUY THIS?

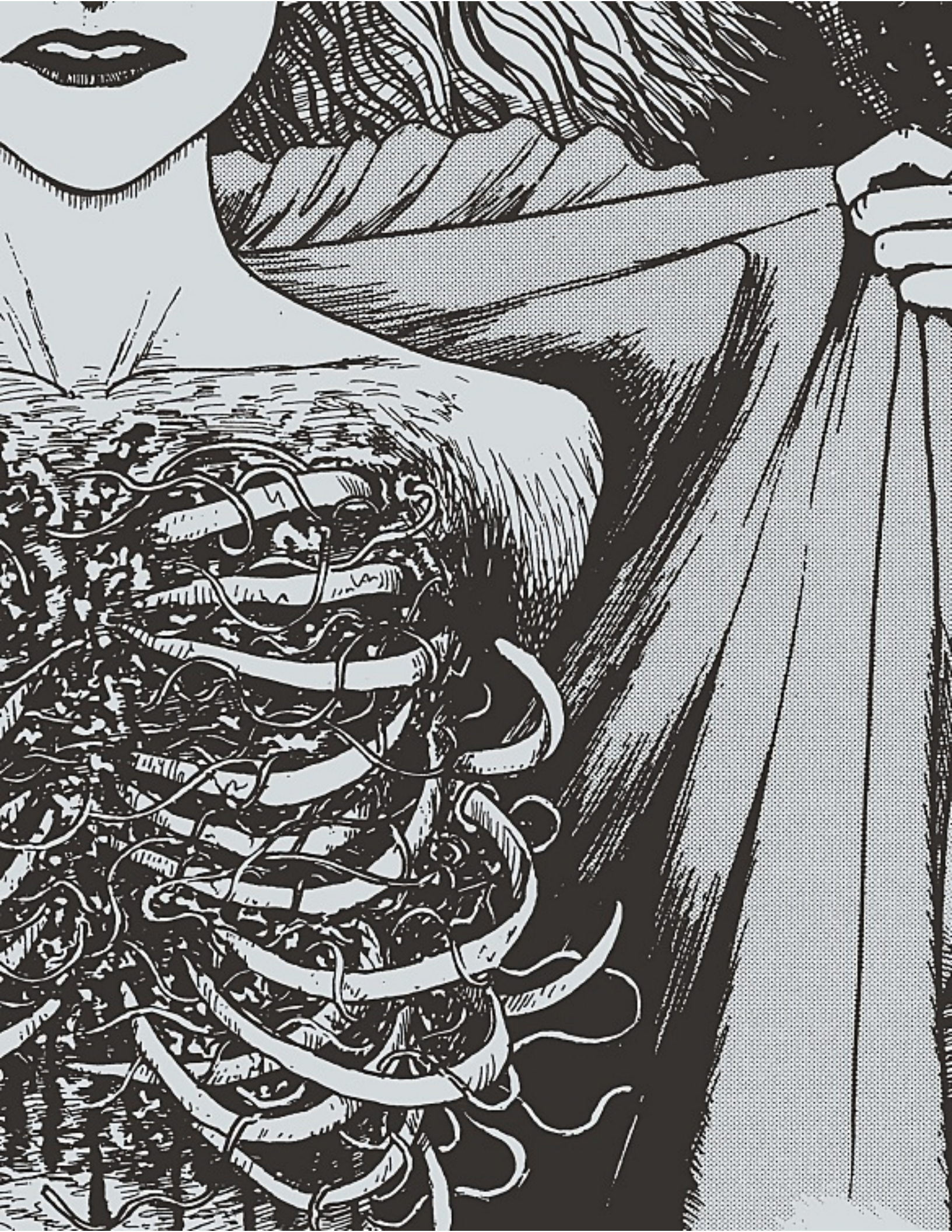
MEMORIES OF REAL POOP / END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Junji Ito made his professional manga debut in 1987 and since then has gone on to be recognized as one of the greatest contemporary artists working in the horror genre. His titles include *Tomie* and *Uzumaki*, which have been adapted into live-action films; *Gyo*, which was adapted into an animated film; and his books *Fragments of Horror*, *Frankenstein*, *Shiver*, *Smashed*, *Venus in the Blind Spot* and *Remina*, all of which are available from VIZ Media.

Ito's influences include classic horror manga artists Kazuo Umezz and Hideshi Hino, as well as authors Yasutaka Tsutsui and H.P. Lovecraft.

His collection *Frankenstein* won the 2019 Eisner Award in the "Best Adaptation from Another Medium" category, and he has received critical acclaim for his spectacular long-form manga adaptation of Osamu Dazai's 1948 novel *No Longer Human*.



Lovesickness

JUNJI ITO STORY COLLECTION

Story & Art by Junji Ito

Ito Junji Kessakushu 4: Shibito no koi wazurai
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LOVESICKNESS is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence and mature themes.

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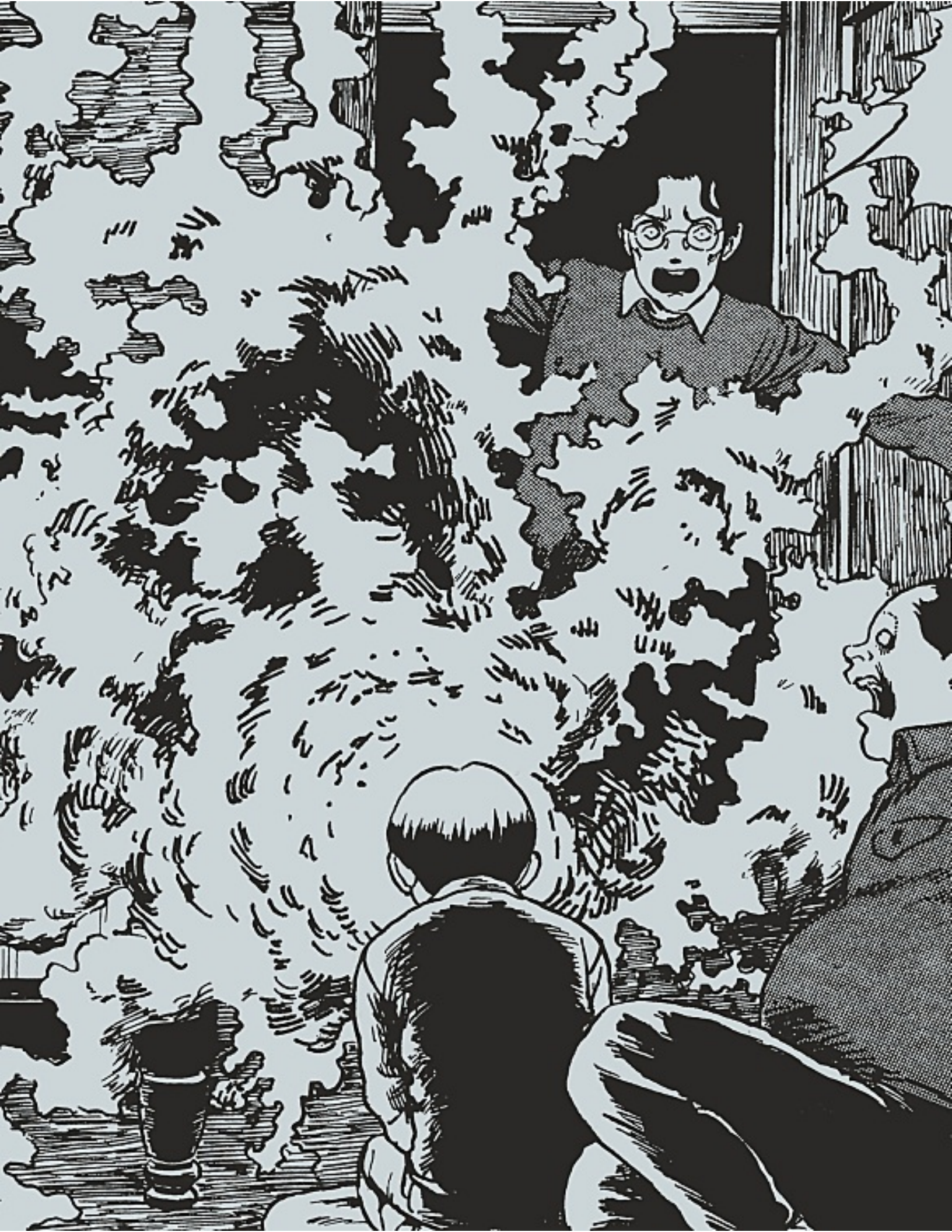

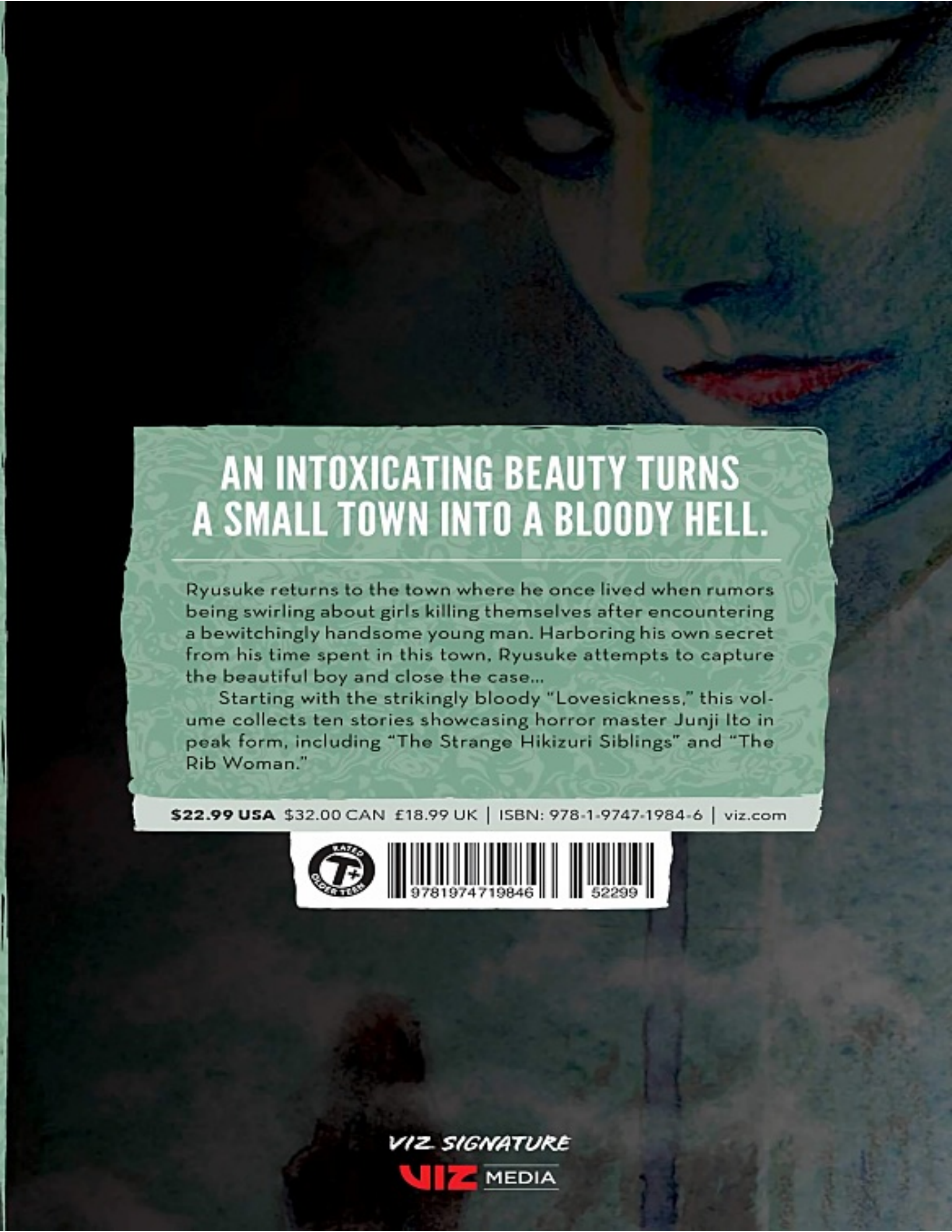

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